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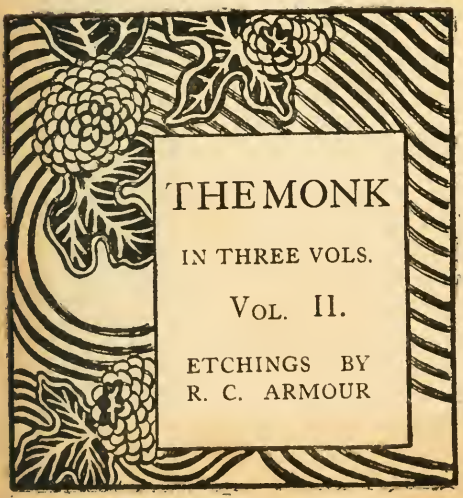
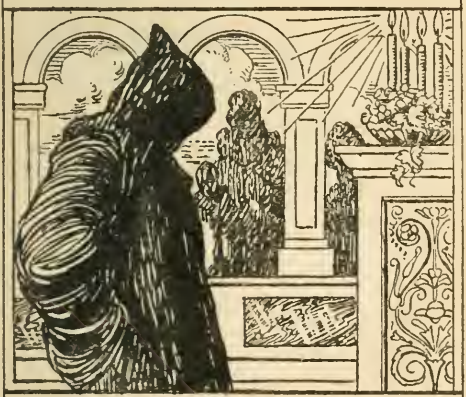

THE MONK
IN THREE VOLS.
VOL. II.
ETCHINGS BY
R. C. ARMOUR

I read the wearisome Adventures.

THE·MONK
A·ROMANCE
BY
M·G·LEWIS·

SOMNIA,TERRORES MAGICOS,MIRACVLA,SAGAS
NOCTVRNOS LEMVRES PORTENTAQVE.
HORAT.

DREAMS,MAGIC TERRORS,SPELLS OF
MIGHTY POWER
WITCHES AND GHOSTS WHO ROVE AT
MIDNIGHT HOVR.



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LIST OF ETCHINGS

1. I READ THE WEARISOME ADVENTURES . . . . *Frontispiece*

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THE MONK

CHAPTER IV

Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless; thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with! Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence!

Macbeth.

My journey was uncommonly agreeable. I found the baron a man of some sense, but little knowledge of the world. He had passed a great part of his life without stirring beyond the precincts of his own domains, and consequently his manners were far from being the most polished; but he was hearty, good-humoured, and friendly. His attention to me was all that I could wish, and I had every reason to be satisfied with his behaviour. His ruling passion was hunting, which he had brought himself to consider as a serious occupation, and, when talking over some remarkable chace, he treated the subject with as much gravity as if it had been a battle on which the fate of two kingdoms was depending. I happened to be a tolerable sportsman: soon after my arrival at Lindenberg, I gave some proofs of my dexterity. The baron immediately marked me down for a

man of genius, and vowed to me an eternal friendship.

That friendship was become to me by no means indifferent. At the castle of Lindenberg, I beheld for the first time your sister, the lovely Agnes. For me, whose heart was unoccupied, and who grieved at the void, to see her and to love her were the same. I found in Agnes all that was requisite to secure my affection. She was then scarcely sixteen; her person, light and elegant, was already formed; she possessed several talents in perfection, particularly those of music and drawing: her character was gay, open, and good-humoured; and the graceful simplicity of her dress and manners formed an advantageous contrast to the art and studied coquetry of the Parisian dames, whom I had just quitted. From the moment that I beheld her, I felt the most lively interest in her fate. I made many enquiries respecting her of the baroness.

"She is my niece," replied that lady; "you are still ignorant, Don Alphonso, that I am your countrywoman. I am sister to the Duke of Medina Celi. Agnes is the daughter of my second brother, Don Gaston; she has been destined to the convent from her cradle, and will soon make her profession at Madrid."

[Here Lorenzo interrupted the marquis by an exclamation of surprise.

"Intended for the convent from her cradle!" said he: "By heaven, this is the first word that I ever heard of such a design."

"I believe it, my dear Lorenzo," answered Don Raymond; "but you must listen to me with

patience. You will not be less surprised, when I relate some particulars of your family still unknown to you, and which I have learnt from the mouth of Agnes herself."

He then resumed his narrative as follows :]

You cannot but be aware, that your parents were unfortunately slaves to the grossest superstition : when this foible was called into play, their every other sentiment, their every other passion, yielded to its irresistible strength. While she was big with Agnes, your mother was seized by a dangerous illness, and given over by her physicians. In this situation Donna Inesilla vowed that, if she recovered from her malady, the child then living in her bosom, if a girl, should be dedicated to St. Clare ; if a boy, to St. Benedict. Her prayers were heard ; she got rid of her complaint ; Agnes entered the world alive, and was immediately destined to the service of St. Clare.

Don Gaston readily chimed in with his lady's wishes : but knowing the sentiments of the duke, his brother, respecting a monastic life, it was determined that your sister's destination should be carefully concealed from him. The better to guard the secret, it was resolved that Agnes should accompany her aunt, Donna Rodolpha, into Germany, whither that lady was on the point of following her new-married husband, Baron Lindenberg. On her arrival at that estate, the young Agnes was put into a convent, situated but a few miles from the castle. The nuns, to whom her education was confided, performed their charge with exactitude : they made her a perfect mistress of many accomplishments, and

strove to infuse into her mind a taste for the retirement and tranquil pleasures of a convent. But a secret instinct made the young recluse sensible that she was not born for solitude : in all the freedom of youth and gaiety, she scrupled not to treat as ridiculous many ceremonies which the nuns regarded with awe ; and she was never more happy than when her lively imagination inspired her with some scheme to plague the stiff lady abbess, or the ugly, ill-tempered old porteress. She looked with disgust upon the prospect before her : however, no alternative was offered to her, and she submitted to the decree of her parents, though not without secret repining.

That repugnance she had not art enough to conceal long : Don Gaston was informed of it. Alarmed, Lorenzo, lest your affection for her should oppose itself to his projects, and lest you should positively object to your sister's misery, he resolved to keep the whole affair from *your* knowledge as well as the duke's, till the sacrifice should be consummated. The season of her taking the veil was fixed for the time when you should be upon your travels : in the meanwhile no hint was dropped of Donna Inesilla's fatal vow. Your sister was never permitted to know your direction. All your letters were read before she received them, and those parts effaced which were likely to nourish her inclination for the world : her answers were dictated either by her aunt, or by Dame Cunegonda, her governess. These particulars I learnt partly from the baroness herself.

I immediately determined upon rescuing this lovely girl from a fate so contrary to her inclina-

tions, and ill suited to her merit. I endeavoured to ingratiate myself into her favour: I boasted of my friendship and intimacy with you. She listened to me with avidity; she seemed to devour my words while I spoke in your praise, and her eyes thanked me for my affection to her brother. My constant and unremitted attention at length gained me her heart, and with difficulty I obliged her to confess that she loved me. When, however, I proposed her quitting the castle of Lindenberg, she rejected the idea in positive terms.

"Be generous, Alphonso," she said; "you possess my heart, but use not the gift ignobly. Employ not your ascendency over me in persuading me to take a step at which I should hereafter have to blush. I am young and deserted: my brother, my only friend, is separated from me, and my other relations act with me as my enemies. Take pity on my unprotected situation. Instead of seducing me to an action which would cover me with shame, strive rather to gain the affections of those who govern me. The baron esteems you. My aunt, to others ever harsh, proud, and contemptuous, remembers that you rescued her from the hands of murderers, and wears with you alone the appearance of kindness and benignity. Try then your influence over my guardians. If they consent to our union, my hand is yours. From your account of my brother, I cannot doubt your obtaining his approbation: and when they find the impossibility of executing their design, I trust that my parents will excuse my disobedience, and expiate by some other sacrifice my mother's fatal vow."

From the first moment that I beheld Agnes, I had endeavoured to conciliate the favour of her relations. Authorised by the confession of her regard, I redoubled my exertions. My principal battery was directed against the baroness: it was easy to discover that her word was law in the castle: her husband paid her the most absolute submission, and considered her as a superior being. She was about forty: in her youth she had been a beauty; but her charms had been upon that large scale which can but ill sustain the shock of years: however, she still possessed some remains of them. Her understanding was strong and excellent when not obscured by prejudice, which unluckily was but seldom the case. Her passions were violent: she spared no pains to gratify them, and pursued with unremitting vengeance those who opposed themselves to her wishes. The warmest of friends, the most inveterate of enemies, such was the Baroness Lindenberg.

I laboured incessantly to please her: unluckily I succeeded but too well. She seemed gratified by my attention, and treated me with a distinction accorded by her to no one else. One of my daily occupations was reading to her for several hours: those hours I should much rather have passed with Agnes; but as I was conscious that complaisance for her aunt would advance our union, I submitted with a good grace to the penance imposed upon me. Donna Rodolpha's library was principally composed of old Spanish romances: these were her favourite studies, and once a day one of these unmerciful volumes was put regularly into my hands. I read the wearisome

adventures of *Perceforest, Tirante the White, Palmerin of England,* and *The Knight of the Sun,* till the book was on the point of falling from my hands through ennui. However, the increasing pleasure which the baroness seemed to take in my society, encouraged me to persevere; and latterly she showed for me a partiality so marked, that Agnes advised me to seize the first opportunity of declaring our mutual passion to your aunt.

One evening I was alone with Donna Rodolpha, in her own apartment. As our readings generally treated of love, Agnes was never permitted to assist at them. I was just congratulating myself on having finished *The Loves of Tristan and the Queen Iseult*——

"Ah! the unfortunates!" cried the baroness: "How say you, Segnor? Do you think it possible for man to feel an attachment so disinterested and sincere?"

"I cannot doubt it," replied I; "my own heart furnishes me with the certainty. Ah! Donna Rodolpha, might I but hope for your approbation of my love! might I but confess the name of my mistress, without incurring your resentment!"

She interrupted me.

"Suppose I were to spare you that confession? Suppose I were to acknowledge that the object of your desires is not unknown to me? Suppose I were to say that she returns your affection, and laments not less sincerely than yourself the unhappy vows which separate her from you?"

"Ah! Donna Rodolpha!" I exclaimed, throwing myself upon my knees before her, and pressing her hand to my lips, "you have discovered my

secret! What is your decision? Must I despair, or may I reckon upon your favour?"

She withdrew not the hand which I held; but she turned from me, and covered her face with the other.

"How can I refuse it you?" she replied: "Ah! Don Alphonso, I have long perceived to whom your attentions were directed, but till now I perceived not the impression which they had made upon my heart. At length I can no longer hide my weakness either from myself or from you. I yield to the violence of my passion, and own that I adore you! For three long months I stifled my desires; but growing stronger by resistance, I submit to their impetuosity. Pride, fear, and honour, respect for myself, and my engagements to the baron, all are vanquished. I sacrifice them to my love for you, and it still seems to me that I pay too mean a price for your possession."

She paused for an answer.—Judge, my Lorenzo, what must have been my confusion at this discovery. I at once saw all the magnitude of this obstacle, which I had myself raised to my happiness. The baroness had placed those attentions to her own account, which I had merely paid her for the sake of Agnes: and the strength of her expressions, the looks which accompanied them, and my knowledge of her revengeful disposition, made me tremble for myself and my beloved. I was silent for some minutes. I knew not how to reply to her declaration: I could only resolve to clear up the mistake without delay, and for the present to conceal from her knowledge the name of my mistress. No sooner had she avowed her

passion, than the transports which before were evident in my features gave place to consternation and constraint. I dropped her hand, and rose from my knees. The change in my countenance did not escape her observation.

"What means this silence?" said she in a trembling voice: "Where is that joy which you led me to expect?"

"Forgive me, Segnora," I answered, "if what necessity forces from me should seem harsh and ungrateful. To encourage you in an error, which however it may flatter myself, must prove to you the source of disappointment, would make me appear criminal in every eye. Honour obliges me to inform you that you have mistaken for the solicitude of love what was only the attention of friendship. The latter sentiment is that which I wished to excite in your bosom: to entertain a warmer, respect for you forbids me, and gratitude for the baron's generous treatment. Perhaps these reasons would not be sufficient to shield me from your attractions, were it not that my affections are already bestowed upon another. You have charms, Segnora, which might captivate the most insensible; no heart unoccupied could resist them. Happy is it for me that mine is no longer in my possession, or I should have to reproach myself for ever with having violated the laws of hospitality. Recollect yourself, noble lady! recollect what is owed by you to honour, by me to the baron, and replace by esteem and friendship those sentiments which I never can return."

The baroness turned pale at this unexpected and positive declaration: she doubted whether

she slept or woke. At length recovering from her surprise, consternation gave place to rage, and the blood rushed back into her cheeks with violence.

"Villain!" she cried; "Monster of deceit! Thus is the avowal of my love received! Is it thus that . . . but, no, no! it cannot, it shall not be! Alphonso, behold me at your feet! Be witness of my despair! Look with pity on a woman who loves you with sincere affection! She who possesses your heart, how has she merited such a treasure? What sacrifice has she made to you? What raises her above Rodolpha?"

I endeavoured to lift her from her knees.

"For God's sake, Segnora, restrain these transports; they disgrace yourself and me. Your exclamations may be heard, and your secret divulged to your attendants. I see that my presence only irritates you: permit me to retire."

I prepared to quit the apartment: the baroness caught me suddenly by the arm.

"And who is this happy rival?" said she in a menacing tone; "I will know her name, and *when* I know it . . .! She is some one in my power; you entreated my favour, my protection! Let me but find her, let me but know who dares to rob me of your heart, and she shall suffer every torment which jealousy and disappointment can inflict. Who is she? Answer me this moment. Hope not to conceal her from my vengeance! Spies shall be set over you; every step, every look shall be watched; your eyes will discover my rival; I shall know her; and when she is found, tremble, Alphonso, for her and for yourself."

As she uttered these last words, her fury mounted to such a pitch as to stop her powers of respiration. She panted, groaned, and at length fainted away. As she was falling I caught her in my arms, and placed her upon a sofa. Then hastening to the door, I summoned her women to her assistance; I committed her to their care, and seized the opportunity of escaping.

Agitated and confused beyond expression, I bent my steps towards the garden. The benignity with which the baroness listened to me at first, had raised my hopes to the highest pitch: I imagined her to have perceived my attachment for her niece, and to approve of it. Extreme was my disappointment at understanding the true purport of her discourse. I knew not what course to take: the superstition of the parents of Agnes, aided by her aunt's unfortunate passion, seemed to oppose such obstacles to our union as were almost insurmountable.

As I passed by a low parlour, whose windows looked into the garden, through the door which stood half open I observed Agnes seated at a table. She was occupied in drawing, and several unfinished sketches were scattered round her. I entered, still undetermined whether I should acquaint her with the declaration of the baroness.

"Oh! is it only you?" said she, raising her head. "You are no stranger, and I shall continue my occupation without ceremony. Take a chair, and seat yourself by me."

I obeyed, and placed myself near the table. Unconscious what I was doing, and totally occupied by the scene which had just passed, I

took up some of the drawings and cast my eyes over them. One of the subjects struck me from its singularity. It represented the great hall of the castle of Lindenberg. A door conducting to a narrow staircase stood half open. In the foreground appeared a group of figures, placed in the most grotesque attitudes; terror was expressed upon every countenance. Here was one upon his knees, with his eyes cast up to heaven, and praying most devoutly; there, another was creeping away upon all fours. Some hid their faces in their cloaks, or the laps of their companions; some had concealed themselves beneath a table, on which the remnants of a feast were visible; while others, with gaping mouths and eyes wide-stretched, pointed to a figure supposed to have created this disturbance. It represented a female of more than human stature, clothed in the habit of some religious order. Her face was veiled; on her arm hung a chaplet of beads; her dress was in several places stained with the blood which trickled from a wound upon her bosom. In one hand she held a lamp, in the other a large knife, and she seemed advancing towards the iron gates of the hall.

"What does this mean, Agnes?" said I. "Is this some invention of your own?"

She cast her eyes upon the drawing.

"Oh! no," she replied: "'tis the invention of much wiser heads than mine. But can you possibly have lived at Lindenberg for three whole months without hearing of the bleeding nun?"

"You are the first who ever mentioned the name to me. Pray, who may the lady be?"

"That is more than I can pretend to tell you. All my knowledge of her history comes from an old tradition in this family, which has been handed down from father to son, and is firmly credited throughout the baron's domains. Nay, the baron believes it himself; and as for my aunt, who has a natural turn for the marvellous, she would sooner doubt the veracity of the Bible than of the bleeding nun. Shall I tell you this history?"

I answered, that she would oblige me much by relating it: she resumed her drawing, and then proceeded as follows in a tone of burlesqued gravity:

"It is surprising that in all the chronicles of past times this remarkable personage is never once mentioned. Fain would I recount to you her life; but unluckily till after her death she was never known to have existed. Then first did she think it necessary to make some noise in the world, and with that intention she made bold to seize upon the castle of Lindenberg. Having a good taste, she took up her abode in the best room of the house; and once established there, she began to amuse herself by knocking about the tables and chairs in the middle of the night. Perhaps she was a bad sleeper, but this I have never been able to ascertain. According to the tradition, this entertainment commenced about a century ago. It was accompanied with shrieking, howling, groaning, swearing, and many other agreeable noises of the same kind. But though one particular room was more especially honoured with her visits, she did not entirely confine herself

to it. She occasionally ventured into the old galleries, paced up and down the spacious halls; or, sometimes stopping at the doors of the chambers she wept and wailed there to the universal terror of the inhabitants. In these nocturnal excursions she was seen by different people, who all describe her appearance as you behold it here traced by the hand of her unworthy historian."

The singularity of this account insensibly engaged my attention.

"Did she never speak to those who met her?" said I.

"Not she. The specimens indeed which she gave nightly of her talents for conversation were by no means inviting. Sometimes the castle rang with oaths and execrations: a moment after she repeated her paternoster: now she howled out the most horrible blasphemies, and then chaunted De profundis as orderly as if still in the choir. In short, she seemed a mighty capricious being: but whether she prayed or cursed, whether she was impious or devout, she always contrived to terrify her auditors out of their senses. The castle became scarcely habitable; and its lord was so frightened by these midnight revels, that one fine morning he was found dead in his bed. This success seemed to please the nun mightily, for now she made more noise than ever. But the next baron proved too cunning for her. He made his appearance with a celebrated exorciser in his hand, who feared not to shut himself up for a night in the haunted chamber. There it seems that he had a hard battle with the ghost, before she would

promise to be quiet. She was obstinate, but he was more so; and at length she consented to let the inhabitants of the castle take a good night's rest. For some time after no news was heard of her. But at the end of five years the exorciser died, and then the nun ventured to peep abroad again. However, she was now grown more tractable and well-behaved. She walked about in silence, and never made her appearance above once in five years. This custom, if you will believe the baron, still continues. He is fully persuaded, that on the fifth of May of every fifth year, as soon as the clock strikes one, the door of the haunted chamber opens. [Observe, that this room has been shut up for near a century.] Then out walks the ghostly nun with her lamp and dagger: she descends the staircase of the eastern tower, and crosses the great hall. On that night the porter always leaves the gates of the castle open, out of respect to the apparition: not that this is thought by any means necessary, since she could easily whip through the key-hole if she chose it: but merely out of politeness, and to prevent her from making her exit in a way so derogatory to the dignity of her ghostship."

"And whither does she go on quitting the castle?"

"To heaven, I hope; but if she does, the place is certainly not to her taste, for she always returns after an hour's absence. The lady then retires to her chamber, and is quiet for another five years."

"And you believe this, Agnes?"

"How can you ask such a question? No, no, Alphonso! I have too much reason to lament

superstition's influence to be its victim myself. However, I must not avow my incredulity to the baroness : she entertains not a doubt of this history. As to Dame Cunegonda, my governess, she protests that fifteen years ago she saw the spectre with her own eyes. She related to me one evening, how she and several other domestics had been terrified while at supper by the appearance of the bleeding nun, as the ghost is called in the castle : 'tis from her account that I drew this sketch, and you may be certain that Cunegonda was not omitted. There she is ! I shall never forget what a passion she was in, and how ugly she looked while she scolded me for having made her picture so like herself ! "

Here she pointed to a burlesque figure of an old woman in an attitude of terror.

In spite of the melancholy which oppressed me, I could not help smiling at the playful imagination of Agnes : she had perfectly preserved Dame Cunegonda's resemblance, but had so much exaggerated every fault, and rendered every feature so irresistibly laughable, that I could easily conceive the duenna's anger.

" The figure is admirable, my dear Agnes ! I knew not that you possessed such talents for the ridiculous."

" Stay a moment," she replied ; " I will show you a figure still more ridiculous than Dame Cunegonda's. If it pleases you, you may dispose of it as seems best to yourself."

She rose, and went to a cabinet at some little distance : unlocking a drawer, she took out a small case, which she opened, and presented to me.

"Do you know the resemblance?" said she, smiling

It was her own.

Transported at the gift, I pressed the portrait to my lips with passion: I threw myself at her feet, and declared my gratitude in the warmest and most affectionate terms. She listened to me with complaisance, and assured me that she shared my sentiments; when suddenly she uttered a loud shriek, disengaged the hand which I held, and flew from the room by a door which opened to the garden. Amazed at this abrupt departure, I rose hastily from my knees. I beheld with confusion the baroness standing near me, glowing with jealousy, and almost choked with rage. On recovering from her swoon, she had tortured her imagination to discover her concealed rival. No one appeared to deserve her suspicions more than Agnes. She immediately hastened to find her niece, tax her with encouraging my addresses, and assure herself whether her conjectures were well-grounded. Unfortunately she had already seen enough to need no other confirmation. She arrived at the door of the room, at the precise moment when Agnes gave me her portrait. She heard me profess an everlasting attachment to her rival, and saw me kneeling at her feet. She advanced to separate us; we were too much occupied by each other to perceive her approach, and were not aware of it till Agnes beheld her standing by my side.

Rage on the part of Donna Rodolpha, embarrassment on mine, for some time kept us both silent. The lady recovered herself first.

" My suspicions then were just," said she ; " the coquetry of my niece has triumphed, and 'tis to her that I am sacrificed. In one respect, however, I am fortunate ; I shall not be the only one who laments a disappointed passion. You, too, shall know what it is to love without hope ! I daily expect orders for restoring Agnes to her parents. Immediately upon her arrival in Spain, she will take the veil, and place an insuperable barrier to your union. You may spare your supplications," she continued, perceiving me on the point of speaking ; " my resolution is fixed and immovable. Your mistress shall remain a close prisoner in her chamber, till she exchanges this castle for the cloister. Solitude will perhaps recall her to a sense of her duty ; but to prevent your opposing that wished event, I must inform you, Don Alphonso, that your presence here is no longer agreeable either to the baron or myself. It was not to talk nonsense to my niece that your relations sent you to Germany : your business was to travel, and I should be sorry to impede any longer so excellent a design. Farewell, Segnor ; remember, that to-morrow morning we meet for the last time."

Having said this, she darted upon me a look of pride, contempt, and malice, and quitted the apartment. I also retired to mine, and consumed the night in planning the means of rescuing Agnes from the power of her tyrannical aunt.

After the positive declaration of its mistress, it was impossible for me to make a longer stay at the castle of Lindenberg. Accordingly, I the next day announced my immediate departure. The

baron declared that it gave him sincere pain ; and he expressed himself in my favour so warmly, that I endeavoured to win him over to my interest. Scarcely had I mentioned the name of Agnes, when he stopped me short, and said, that it was totally out of his power to interfere in the business. I saw that it was in vain to argue ; the baroness governed her husband with despotic sway, and I easily perceived that she had prejudiced him against the match. Agnes did not appear. I entreated permission to take leave of her, but my prayer was rejected. I was obliged to depart without seeing her.

At quitting him, the baron shook my hand affectionately, and assured me that, as soon as his niece was gone, I might consider his house as my own.

" Farewell, Don Alphonso ! " said the baroness, and stretched out her hand to me.

I took it, and offered to carry it to my lips. She prevented me. Her husband was at the other end of the room, and out of hearing.

" Take care of yourself," she continued ; " my love is become hatred, and my wounded pride shall not be unatoned. Go where you will, my vengeance shall follow you ! "

She accompanied these words with a look sufficient to make me tremble. I answered not, but hastened to quit the castle.

As my chaise drove out of the court, I looked up to the windows of your sister's chamber : nobody was to be seen there. I threw myself back despondent in my carriage. I was attended by no other servants than a Frenchman, whom I had

hired at Strasbourg in Stephano's room, and my little page, whom I before mentioned to you. The fidelity, intelligence, and good temper of Theodore had already made him dear to me; but he now prepared to lay an obligation on me, which made me look upon him as a guardian genius. Scarcely had we proceeded half a mile from the castle, when he rode up to the chaise door.

"Take courage, Segnor!" said he in Spanish, which he had already learnt to speak with fluency and correctness: "While you were with the baron, I watched the moment when Dame Cunegonda was below stairs, and mounted into the chamber over that of Donna Agnes. I sang, as loud as I could, a little German air, well known to her, hoping that she would recollect my voice. I was not disappointed, for I soon heard her window open. I hastened to let down a string with which I had provided myself. Upon hearing the casement closed again, I drew up the string, and fastened to it, I found this scrap of paper."

He then presented me with a small note, addressed to me. I opened it with impatience. It contained the following words, written in pencil:

"Conceal yourself for the next fortnight in some neighbouring village. My aunt will believe you to have quitted Lindenberg, and I shall be restored to liberty. I will be in the west pavilion at twelve on the night of the thirtieth. Fail not to be there, and we shall have an opportunity of concerting our future plans. Adieu.—Agnes."

At perusing these lines my tranpsorts exceeded all bounds; neither did I set any to the expressions

of gratitude which I heaped upon Theodore. In fact, his address and attention merited my warmest praise. You will readily believe that I had not entrusted him with my passion for Agnes; but the arch youth had too much discernment not to discover my secret, and too much discretion not to conceal his knowledge of it. He observed in silence what was going on, nor strove to make himself an agent in the business till my interests required his interference. I equally admired his judgment, his penetration, his address, and his fidelity. This was not the first occasion in which I had found him of infinite use, and I was every day more convinced of his quickness and capacity. During my short stay at Strasbourg, he had applied himself diligently to learning the rudiments of Spanish. He continued to study it, and with so much success, that he spoke it with the same facility as his native language. He passed the greatest part of his time in reading. He had acquired much information for his age; and united the advantages of a lively countenance and prepossessing figure to an excellent understanding and the very best of hearts. He is now fifteen. He is still in my service; and, when you see him, I am sure that he will please you. But excuse this digression; I return to the subject which I quitted.

I obeyed the instructions of Agnes. I proceeded to Munich: there I left my chaise under the care of Lucas, my French servant, and then returned on horseback to a small village about four miles distant from the castle of Lindenberg. Upon arriving there, a story was related to the

host at whose inn I alighted, which prevented his wondering at my making so long a stay in his house. The old man, fortunately, was credulous and incurious: he believed all I said, and sought to know no more than what I thought proper to tell him. Nobody was with me but Theodore: both were disguised: and as we kept ourselves close, we were not suspected to be other than what we seemed. In this manner the fortnight passed away. During that time I had the pleasing conviction that Agnes was once more at liberty. She passed through the village with Dame Cunegonda: she seemed in good health and spirits, and talked to her companion without any appearance of constraint.

"Who are those ladies?" said I to my host as the carriage passed.

"Baron Lindenberg's niece, with her governess," he replied: "she goes regularly every Friday to the convent of St. Catherine, in which she was brought up, and which is situated about a mile from hence."

You may be certain that I waited with impatience for the ensuing Friday. I again beheld my lovely mistress. She cast her eyes upon me as she passed the inn door. A blush which overspread her cheek told me, that in spite of my disguise I had been recognised. I bowed profoundly. She returned the compliment by a slight inclination of the head, as if made to one inferior, and looked another way till the carriage was out of sight.

The long-expected, long-wished-for night arrived. It was calm, and the moon was at the full. As soon as the clock struck eleven I hastened to my

appointment, determined not to be too late. Theodore had provided a ladder; I ascended the garden wall without difficulty. The page followed me, and drew the ladder after us. I posted myself in the west pavilion, and waited impatiently for the approach of Agnes. Every breeze that whispered, every leaf that fell, I believed to be her footstep, and hastened to meet her. Thus was I obliged to pass a full hour, every minute of which appeared to me an age. The castle bell at length tolled twelve, and scarcely could I believe the night to be no farther advanced. Another quarter of an hour elapsed, and I heard the light foot of my mistress approaching the pavilion with precaution. I flew to receive her, and conducted her to a seat. I threw myself at her feet, and was expressing my joy at seeing her, when she thus interrupted me:

"We have no time to lose, Alphonso: the moments are precious; for, though no more a prisoner, Cunegonda watches my every step. An express is arrived from my father; I must depart immediately for Madrid, and 'tis with difficulty that I have obtained a week's delay. The superstition of my parents, supported by the representations of my cruel aunt, leaves me no hope of softening them to compassion. In this dilemma, I have resolved to commit myself to your honour. God grant that you may never give me cause to repent my resolution! Flight is my only resource from the horrors of a convent; and my imprudence must be excused by the urgency of the danger. Now listen to the plan by which I hope to effect my escape.

"We are now at the thirtieth of April. On the fifth day from this the visionary nun is expected to appear. In my last visit to the convent I provided myself with a dress proper for the character. A friend whom I have left there, and to whom I made no scruple to confide my secret, readily consented to supply me with a religious habit. Provide a carriage, and be with it at a little distance from the great gate of the castle. As soon as the clock strikes 'one,' I shall quit my chamber, dressed in the same apparel as the ghost is supposed to wear. Whoever meets me will be too much terrified to oppose my escape: I shall easily reach the door, and throw myself under your protection. Thus far success is certain: but, oh! Alphonso, should you decieve me; should you despise my imprudence, and reward it with ingratitude, the world will not hold a being more wretched than myself! I feel all the dangers to which I shall be exposed. I feel that I am giving you a right to treat me with levity: but I rely upon your love, upon your honour! The step which I am on the point of taking will incense my relations against me. Should you desert me; should you betray the trust reposed in you, I shall have no friend to punish your insult, or support my cause. On yourself alone rests all my hope; and if your own heart does not plead in my behalf, I am undone for ever!"

The tone in which she pronounced these words was so touching that, in spite of my joy at receiving her promise to follow me, I could not help being affected. I also repined in secret at not having taken the precaution to provide a carriage at the

village; in which case, I might have carried off Agnes that very night. Such an attempt was now impracticable; neither carriage nor horses were to be procured nearer than Munich, which was distant from Lindenberg two good days' journey. I was therefore obliged to chime in with her plan, which, in truth, seemed well arranged. Her disguise would secure her from being stopped in quitting the castle, and would enable her to step into the carriage at the very gate, without difficulty or losing time.

Agnes reclined her head mournfully upon my shoulder, and, by the light of the moon, I saw tears flowing down her cheek. I strove to dissipate her melancholy, and encouraged her to look forward to the prospect of happiness. I protested in the most solemn terms that her virtue and innocence would be safe in my keeping; and that, till the church had made her my lawful wife, her honour should be held by me as sacred as a sister's. I told her, that my first care should be to find you out, Lorenzo, and reconcile you to our union; and I was continuing to speak in the same strain, when a noise without alarmed me. Suddenly the door of the pavilion was thrown open, and Cunegonda stood before us. She had heard Agnes steal out of her chamber, followed her into the garden, and perceived her entering the pavilion. Favoured by the trees which shaded it, and unperceived by Theodore, who waited at a little distance, she had approached in silence, and overheard our whole conversation.

"Admirable!" cried Cunegonda, in a voice shrill with passion. while Agnes uttered a loud

shriek. "By St. Barbara, young lady, you have an excellent invention! You must personate the bleeding nun, truly? What impiety! What incredulity! Marry, I have a good mind to let you pursue your plan. When the real ghost met you, I warrant you would be in a pretty condition! Don Alphonso, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for seducing a young, ignorant creature to leave her family and friends. However, for this time, at least, I shall mar your wicked designs. The noble lady shall be informed of the whole affair, and Agnes must defer playing the spectre till a better opportunity. Farewell, Segnor.—Donna Agnes, let me have the honour of conducting your ghostship back to your apartment."

She approached the sofa on which her trembling pupil was seated, took her by the hand, and prepared to lead her from the pavilion.

I detained her, and strove by entreaties, soothing, promises, and flattery, to win her to my party; but, finding all that I could say of no avail, I abandoned the vain attempt.

"Your obstinacy must be its own punishment," said I; "but one resource remains to save Agnes and myself, and I shall not hesitate to employ it."

Terrified at this menace, she again endeavoured to quit the pavilion; but I seized her by the wrist, and detained her forcibly. At the same moment Theodore, who had followed her into the room, closed the door, and prevented her escape. I took the veil of Agnes; I threw it round the duenna's head, who uttered such piercing shrieks that, in spite of our distance from the castle, I dreaded their being heard. At length I succeeded

in gagging her so completely, that she could not produce a single sound. Theodore and myself, with some difficulty, next contrived to bind her hands and feet with our handkerchiefs; and I advised Agnes to regain her chamber with all diligence. I promised that no harm should happen to Cunegonda; bade her remember that, on the fifth of May, I should be in waiting at the great gate of the castle, and took of her an affectionate farewell. Trembling and uneasy, she had scarce power enough to signify her consent to my plans, and fled back to her apartment in disorder and confusion.

In the meanwhile Theodore assisted me in carrying off my antiquated prize. She was hoisted over the wall, placed before me upon my horse, like a portmanteau, and I galloped away with her from the castle of Lindenberg. The unlucky duenna never had made a more disagreeable journey in her life. She was jolted and shaken till she was become little more than an animated mummy; not to mention her fright when we waded through a small river, through which it was necessary to pass in order to regain the village. Before we reached the inn, I had already determined how to dispose of the troublesome Cunegonda. We entered the street in which the inn stood; and while the page knocked, I waited at a little distance. The landlord opened the door with a lamp in his hand.

"Give me the light," said Theodore, "my master is coming."

He snatched the lamp hastily, and purposely let it fall to the ground. The landlord returned

to the kitchen to re-light the lamp, leaving the door open. I profited by the obscurity, sprang from my horse with Cunegonda in my arms, darted upstairs, reached my chamber unperceived, and unlocking the door of a spacious closet, stowed her within it, and then turned the key. The landlord and Theodore soon after appeared with lights: the former expressed himself surprised at my returning so late, but asked no impertinent questions. He soon quitted the room, and left me to exult in the success of my undertaking.

I immediately paid a visit to my prisoner. I strove to persuade her submitting with patience to her temporary confinement. My attempt was unsuccessful. Unable to speak or move, she expressed her fury by her looks; and, except at meals, I never dared to unbind her, or release her from the gag. At such times I stood over her with a drawn sword, and protested that, if she uttered a single cry, I would plunge it in her bosom. As soon as she had done eating, the gag was replaced. I was conscious that this proceeding was cruel, and could only be justified by the urgency of circumstances. As to Theodore, he had no scruples upon the subject; Cunegonda's captivity entertained him beyond measure. During his abode in the castle, a continual warfare had been carried on between him and the duenna; and, now that he found his enemy so absolutely in his power, he triumphed without mercy: he seemed to think of nothing but how to find out new means of plaguing her. Sometimes he affected to pity her misfortune, then laughed at, abused, and mimicked her: he played

her a thousand tricks, each more provoking than the other; and amused himself by telling her that her elopement must have occasioned much surprise at the baron's. This was in fact the case. No one, except Agnes, could imagine what was become of Dame Cunegonda. Every hole and corner was searched for her, the ponds were dragged, and the woods underwent a thorough examination. Still no Dame Cunegonda made her appearance. Agnes kept the secret, and I kept the duenna: the baroness, therefore, remained in total ignorance respecting the old woman's fate, but suspected her to have perished by suicide. Thus passed away five days, during which I had prepared everything necessary for my enterprise. On quitting Agnes, I had made it my first business to despatch a peasant with a letter to Lucas, at Munich, ordering him to take care that a coach and four should arrive about ten o'clock on the fifth of May at the village of Rosenwald. He obeyed my instructions punctually; the equipage arrived at the time appointed. As the period of her lady's elopement drew nearer, Cunegonda's rage increased. I verily believe, that spite and passion would have killed her, had I not luckily discovered her prepossession in favour of cherry-brandy. With this favourite liquor she was plentifully supplied, and, Theodore always remaining to guard her, the gag was occasionally removed. The liquor seemed to have a wonderful effect in softening the acrimony of her nature; and her confinement not admitting of any other amusement, she got drunk regularly once a day, just by way of passing the time.

The fifth of May arrived, a period by me never to be forgotten! Before the clock struck twelve, I betook myself to the scene of action. Theodore followed me on horseback. I concealed the carriage in a spacious cavern of the hill on whose brow the castle was situated. This cavern was of considerable depth, and, among the peasants, was known by the name of Lindenberg Hole. The night was calm and beautiful: the moonbeams fell upon the ancient towers of the castle and shed upon their summits a silver light. All was still around me: nothing was to be heard except the night-breeze sighing among the leaves, the distant barking of village dogs, or the owl who had established herself in a nook of the deserted eastern turret. I heard her melancholy shriek, and looked upwards: she sat upon the ridge of a window, which I recognised to be that of the haunted room. This brought to my remembrance the story of the bleeding nun, and I sighed while I reflected on the influence of superstition, and weakness of human reason. Suddenly I heard a faint chorus steal upon the silence of the night.

"What can occasion that noise, Theodore?"

"A stranger of distinction," replied he, "passed through the village to-day in his way to the castle: he is reported to be the father of Donna Agnes. Doubtless the baron has given an entertainment to celebrate his arrival."

The castle bell announced the hour of midnight. This was the usual signal for the family to retire to bed. Soon after I perceived lights in the castle, moving backwards and forwards in different directions. I conjectured the company to be separating.

I could hear the heavy doors grate as they opened with difficulty; and as they closed again, the rotten casements rattled in their frames. The chamber of Agnes was on the other side of the castle. I trembled lest she should have failed in obtaining the key of the haunted room. Through this it was necessary for her to pass, in order to reach the narrow staircase by which the ghost was supposed to descend into the great hall. Agitated by this apprehension, I kept my eyes constantly fixed upon the window, where I hoped to perceive the friendly glare of a lamp borne by Agnes. I now heard the massy gates unbarred. By the candle in his hand, I distinguished old Conrad, the porter. He set the portal doors wide open, and retired. The lights in the castle gradually disappeared, and at length the whole building was wrapt in darkness.

While I sat upon a broken ridge of the hill, the stillness of the scene inspired me with melancholy ideas not altogether unpleasing. The castle, which stood full in my sight, formed an object equally awful and picturesque. Its ponderous walls, tinged by the moon with solemn brightness; its old and partly ruined towers, lifting themselves into the clouds, and seeming to frown on the plains around them; its lofty battlements, overgrown with ivy, and folding gates, expanding in honour of the visionary inhabitant, made me sensible of a sad and reverential horror. Yet did not these sensations occupy me so fully as to prevent me from witnessing with impatience the slow progress of time. I approached the castle and ventured to walk round it. A few rays of

light still glimmered in the chamber of Agnes. I observed them with joy. I was still gazing upon them, when I perceived a figure draw near the window, and the curtain was carefully closed to conceal the lamp which burned there. Convinced by this observation that Agnes had not abandoned our plan, I returned with a light heart to my former station.

The half-hour struck! The three-quarters struck! My bosom beat high with hope and expectation. At length, the wished-for sound was heard. The bell tolled "one," and the mansion echoed with the noise loud and solemn. I looked up to the casement of the haunted chamber. Scarcely had five minutes elapsed when the expected light appeared. I was now close to the tower. The window was not so far from the ground, but that I fancied I perceived a female figure with a lamp in her hand moving slowly along the apartment. The light soon faded away, and all was again dark and gloomy.

Occasional gleams of brightness darted from the staircase windows as the lovely ghost passed by them. I traced the light through the hall: it reached the portal, and at length I beheld Agnes pass through the folding gates. She was habited exactly as she had described the spectre. A chaplet of beads hung upon her arm; her head was enveloped in a long white veil; her nun's dress was stained with blood; and she had taken care to provide herself with a lamp and dagger. She advanced towards the spot where I stood. I flew to meet her, and clasped her in my arms.

"Agnes!" said I, while I pressed her to my bosom.

"Agnes! Agnes! thou art mine!
"Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!
"In my veins while blood shall roll,
"Thou art mine!
"I am thine!
"Thine my body! thine my soul!"

Terrified and breathless, she was unable to speak. She dropped her lamp and dagger, and sank upon my bosom in silence. I raised her in my arms, and conveyed her to the carriage. Theodore remained behind in order to release Dame Cunegonda. I also charged him with a letter to the baroness, explaining the whole affair, and entreating her good offices in reconciling Don Gaston to my union with his daughter. I discovered to her my real name. I proved to her that my birth and expectations justified my pretending to her niece; and assured her, though it was out of my power to return her love, that I would strive unceasingly to obtain her esteem and friendship.

I stepped into the carriage, where Agnes was already seated. Theodore closed the door, and the postillions drove away. At first I was delighted with the rapidity of our progress; but as soon as we were in no danger of pursuit, I called to the drivers and bade them moderate their pace. They strove in vain to obey me; the horses refused to answer the rein, and continued to rush on with astonishing swiftness. The postillions redoubled their efforts to stop them; but, by kicking and plunging, the beasts soon released themselves from this restraint. Uttering a loud

shriek, the drivers were hurled upon the ground. Immediately thick clouds obscured the sky: the winds howled round us, the lightning flashed, and the thunder roared tremendously. Never did I behold so frightful a tempest! Terrified by the jar of contending elements, the horses seemed every moment to increase their speed. Nothing could interrupt their career; they dragged the carriage through hedges and ditches, dashed down the most dangerous precipices, and seemed to vie in swiftness with the rapidity of the winds.

All this while my companion lay motionless in my arms. Truly alarmed by the magnitude of the danger, I was in vain attempting to recall her to her senses, when a loud crash announced that a stop was put to our progress in the most disagreeable manner. The carriage was shattered to pieces. In falling, I struck my temple against a flint. The pain of the wound, the violence of the shock, and apprehension for the safety of Agnes, combined to overpower me so completely that my senses forsook me, and I lay without animation on the ground.

I probably remained for some time in this situation, since, when I opened my eyes, it was broad daylight. Several peasants were standing round me, and seemed disputing whether my recovery was possible. I spoke German tolerably well. As soon as I could utter an articulate sound, I enquired after Agnes. What was my surprise and distress, when assured by the peasants that nobody had been seen answering the description which I gave of her! They told me, that in going to their daily labour they had been

alarmed by observing the fragments of my carriage, and by hearing the groans of a horse, the only one of the four which remained alive: the other three lay dead by my side.

Nobody was near me when they came up, and much time had been lost before they succeeded in recovering me. Uneasy beyond expression respecting the fate of my companion, I besought the peasants to disperse themselves in search of her. I described her dress, and promised immense rewards to who ever brought me any intelligence. As for myself, it was impossible for me to join in the pursuit: I had broken two of my ribs in the fall; my arm, being dislocated, hung useless by my side, and my left leg was shattered so terribly that I never expected to recover its use.

The peasants complied with my request; all left me except four, who made a litter of boughs, and prepared to convey me to the neighbouring town. I enquired its name; it proved to be Ratisbon, and I could scarcely persuade myself that I had travelled to such a distance in a single night. I told the countrymen, that at one o'clock that morning I had passed through the village of Rosenwald. They shook their heads wistfully, and made signs to each other that I must certainly be delirious. I was conveyed to a decent inn, and immediately put to bed. A physician was sent for, who set my arm with success: he then examined my other hurts, and told me that I need be under no apprehension of the consequences of any of them, but ordered me to keep myself quiet, and be prepared for a tedious and painful cure. I answered him, that if he hoped to keep

me quiet, he must first endeavour to procure me some news of a lady who had quitted Rosenwald in my company the night before, and had been with me at the moment when the coach broke down. He smiled, and only replied by advising me to make myself easy, for that all proper care should be taken of me. As he quitted me, the hostess met him at the door of the room.

"The gentleman is not quite in his right senses," I heard him say to her in a low voice; "'tis the natural consequence of his fall, but that will soon be over."

One after another the peasants returned to the inn, and informed me that no traces had been discovered of my unfortunate mistress. Uneasiness now became despair. I entreated them to renew their search in the most urgent terms, doubling the promises which I had already made them. My wild and frantic manner confirmed the bystanders in the idea of my being delirious. No signs of the lady having appeared, they believed her to be a creature fabricated by my over-heated brain and paid no attention to my entreaties. However, the hostess assured me, that a fresh enquiry should be made; but I found afterwards that her promise was only given to quiet me. No further steps were taken in the business.

Though my baggage was left at Munich under the care of my French servant, having prepared myself for a long journey, my purse was amply furnished: besides, my equipage proved to be of distinction, and in consequence all possible attention was paid me at the inn. The day passed away: still no news of Agnes. The

anxiety of fear now gave place to despondency. I ceased to rave about her, and was plunged in the depth of melancholy reflections. Perceiving me to be silent and tranquil, my attendants believed my delirium to have abated, and that my malady had taken a favourable turn. According to the physician's order, I swallowed a composing medicine; and as soon as night shut in, my attendants withdrew, and left me to repose.

That repose I wooed in vain. The agitation of my bosom chased away sleep. Restless in my mind, in spite of the fatigue of my body, I continued to toss about from side to side, till the clock in a neighbouring steeple struck "one." As I listened to the mournful hollow sound, and heard it die away in the wind, I felt a sudden chilliness spread itself over my body. I shuddered without knowing wherefore; cold dews poured down my forehead, and my hair stood bristling with alarm. Suddenly I heard slow and heavy steps ascending the staircase. By an involuntary movement I started up in my bed, and drew back the curtain. A single rushlight, which glimmered upon the hearth, shed a faint gleam through the apartment, which was hung with tapestry. The door was thrown open with violence. A figure entered, and drew near my bed with solemn, measured steps. With trembling apprehension I examined this midnight visitor. God Almighty! it was the bleeding nun! It was my lost companion! Her face was still veiled, but she no longer held her lamp and dagger. She lifted up her veil slowly. What a sight presented itself to my startled eyes! I beheld before me an

animated corpse. Her countenance was long and haggard; her cheeks and lips were bloodless; the paleness of death was spread over her features; and her eyeballs, fixed stedfastly upon me, were lustreless and hollow.

I gazed upon the spectre with horror too great to be described. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid, but the sound expired ere it could pass my lips. My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the same attitude inanimate as a statue.

The visionary nun looked upon me for some minutes in silence: there was something petrifying in her regard. At length, in a low sepulchral voice, she pronounced the following words:

"Raymond! Raymond! thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!
"In thy veins while blood shall roll,
"I am thine!
"Thou art mine!
"Mine thy body! mine thy soul!"——

Breathless with fear, I listened while she repeated my own expressions. The apparition seated herself opposite to me at the foot of the bed, and was silent. Her eyes were fixed earnestly upon mine: they seemed endowed with the property of the rattlesnake's, for I strove in vain to look off her. My eyes were fascinated, and I had not the power of withdrawing them from the spectre's.

In this attitude she remained for a whole long hour, without speaking or moving; nor was I able to do either. At length the clock struck two. The apparition rose from her seat, and approached

the side of the bed. She grasped with her icy fingers my hand, which hung lifeless upon the coverture, and, pressing her cold lips to mine, again repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!" etc.——

She then dropped my hand, quitted the chamber with slow steps, and the door closed after her. Till that moment the faculties of my body had been all suspended; those of my mind had alone been waking. The charm now ceased to operate; the blood which had been frozen in my veins rushed back to my heart with violence; I uttered a deep groan, and sank lifeless upon my pillow.

The adjoining room was only separated from mine by a thin partition; it was occupied by the host and his wife: the former was roused by my groan, and immediately hastened to my chamber; the hostess soon followed him. With some difficulty they succeeded in restoring me to my senses, and immediately sent for the physician, who arrived in all diligence. He declared my fever to be very much increased, and that, if I continued to suffer such violent agitation, he would not take upon him to insure my life. Some medicines which he gave me, in some degree tranquillised my spirits. I fell into a sort of slumber towards day-break, but fearful dreams prevented me from deriving any benefit from my repose. Agnes and the bleeding nun presented themselves by turns to my fancy, and combined to harass and torment me. I awoke fatigued and unrefreshed. My fever seemed rather augmented than diminished; the

agitation of my mind impeded my fractured bones from knitting: I had frequent fainting fits, and during the whole day the physician judged it expedient not to quit me for two hours together.

The singularity of my adventure made me determine to conceal it from every one, since I could not expect that a circumstance so strange should gain credit. I was very uneasy about Agnes. I knew not what she would think at not finding me at the rendezvous, and dreaded her entertaining suspicions of my fidelity. However, I depended upon Theodore's discretion, and trusted that my letter to the baroness would convince her of the rectitude of my intentions. These considerations somewhat lightened my inquietude upon her account; but the impression left upon my mind by my nocturnal visitor grew stronger with every succeeding moment. The night drew near; I dreaded its arrival; yet I strove to persuade myself that the ghost would appear no more, and at all events I desired that a servant might sit up in my chamber.

The fatigue of my body, from not having slept on the former night, co-operating with the strong opiates administered to me in profusion, at length procured me that repose of which I was so much in need. I sank into a profound and tranquil slumber, and had already slept for some hours, when the neighbouring clock roused me by striking "one." Its sound brought with it to my memory all the horrors of the night before. The same cold shivering seized me. I started up in my bed, and perceived the servant fast asleep in an arm-chair near me. I called him by his name: he made no

answer. I shook him forcibly by the arm, and strove in vain to wake him: he was perfectly insensible to my efforts. I now heard the heavy steps ascending the staircase; the door was thrown open, and again the bleeding nun stood before me. Once more my limbs were chained in second infancy: once more I heard those fatal words repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! thou art mine!
"Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!" etc.——

The scene which had shocked me so sensibly on the former night was again presented. The spectre again pressed her lips to mine, again touched me with her rotting fingers, and, as on her first appearance, quitted the chamber as soon as the clock tolled "two."

Every night was this repeated. Far from growing accustomed to the ghost, every succeeding visit inspired me with greater horror. Her idea pursued me continually, and I became the prey of habitual melancholy. The constant agitation of my mind naturally retarded the re-establishment of my health. Several months elapsed before I was able to quit my bed; and when, at length, I was moved to a sofa, I was so faint, spiritless, and emaciated, that I could not cross the room without assistance. The looks of my attendants sufficiently denoted the little hope which they entertained of my recovery. The profound sadness which oppressed me without remission, made the physician consider me to be an hypochondriac. The cause of my distress I carefully concealed in my own bosom, for I knew

that no one could give me relief. The ghost was not even visible to any eye but mine. I had frequently caused attendants to sit up in my room; but the moment that the clock struck "one," irresistible slumber seized them, nor left them till the departure of the ghost.

You may be surprised that during this time I made no enquiries after your sister. Theodore, who with difficulty had discovered my abode, had quieted my apprehensions for her safety; at the same time he convinced me, that all attempts to release her from captivity must be fruitless, till I should be in a condition to return to Spain. The particulars of her adventure, which I shall now relate to you, were partly communicated to me by Theodore, and partly by Agnes herself.

On the fatal night when her elopement was to have taken place, accident had not permitted her to quit her chamber at the appointed time. At length she ventured into the haunted room, descended the staircase leading into the hall, found the gates open as she expected, and left the castle unobserved. What was her surprise at not finding me ready to receive her! She examined the cavern, ranged through every alley of the neighbouring wood, and passed two full hours in this fruitless enquiry. She could discover no traces either of me or of the carriage. Alarmed and disappointed, her only resource was to return to the castle before the baroness missed her; but here she found herself in a fresh embarrassment. The bell had already tolled "two," the ghostly hour was past, and the careful porter had locked the folding gates. After much ir-

resolution she ventured to knock softly. Luckily for her, Conrad was still awake: he heard the noise, and rose, murmuring at being called up a second time. No sooner had he opened one of the doors, and beheld the supposed apparition waiting there for admittance, than he uttered a loud cry, and dropped upon his knees. Agnes profited by his terror: she glided by him, flew to her own apartment, and, having thrown off her spectre's trappings, retired to bed, endeavouring in vain to account for my disappearing.

In the meanwhile, Theodore, having seen my carriage drive off with the false Agnes, returned joyfully to the village. The next morning he released Cunegonda from her confinement, and accompanied her to the castle. There he found the baron, his lady, and Don Gaston, disputing together upon the porter's relation. All of them agreed in believing the existence of spectres; but the latter contended, that for a ghost to knock for admittance was a proceeding till then unwitnessed, and totally incompatible with the immaterial nature of a spirit. They were still discussing the subject, when the page appeared with Cunegonda, and cleared up the mystery. On hearing his deposition, it was agreed unanimously, that the Agnes whom Theodore had seen step into my carriage must have been the bleeding nun, and that the ghost who had terrified Conrad was no other than Don Gaston's daughter.

The first surprise which this discovery occasioned being over, the baroness resolved to make it of use in persuading her niece to take the veil. Fearing lest so advantageous an establishment for his

daughter should induce Don Gaston to renounce his resolution, she suppressed my letter, and continued to represent me as a needy unknown adventurer. A childish vanity had led me to conceal my real name even from my mistress; I wished to be loved for myself, not for being the son and heir of the Marquis de las Cisternas. The consequence was, that my rank was known to no one in the castle except the baroness, and she took good care to confine the knowledge to her own breast. Don Gaston having approved his sister's design, Agnes was summoned to appear before them. She was taxed with having meditated an elopement, obliged to make a full confession, and was amazed at the gentleness with which it was received: but what was her affliction, when informed that the failure of her project must be attributed to me! Cunegonda, tutored by the baroness, told her that when I released her I had desired her to inform her lady that our connection was at an end, that the whole affair was occasioned by a false report, and that it by no means suited my circumstances to marry a woman without fortune or expectations.

To this account my sudden disappearing gave but too great an air of probability. Theodore, who could have contradicted the story, by Donna Rodolpha's order was kept out of her sight. What proved a still greater confirmation of my being an impostor, was the arrival of a letter from yourself, declaring that you had no sort of acquaintance with Alphonso d'Alvarada. These seeming proofs of my perfidy, aided by the artful insinuations of her aunt, by Cunegonda's flattery, and her

father's threats and anger, entirely conquered your sister's repugnance to a convent. Incensed at my behaviour, and disgusted with the world in general, she consented to receive the veil. She passed another month at the castle of Lindenberg, during which my non-appearance confirmed her in her resolution, and then accompanied Don Gaston into Spain. Theodore was now set at liberty. He hastened to Munich, where I had promised to let him hear from me; but finding from Lucas that I never arrived there, he pursued his search with indefatigable perseverance, and at length succeeded in rejoining me at Ratisbon.

So much was I altered, that scarcely could he recollect my features: the distress visible upon his sufficiently testified how lively was the interest which he felt for me. The society of this amiable boy, whom I had always considered rather as a companion than a servant, was now my only comfort. His conversation was gay, yet sensible, and his observations shrewd and entertaining. He had picked up much more knowledge than is usual at his age; but what rendered him most agreeable to me, was his having a delightful voice, and no mean skill in music. He had also acquired some taste in poetry, and even ventured occasionally to write verses himself. He frequently composed little ballads in Spanish. His compositions were but indifferent, I must confess, yet they were pleasing to me from their novelty; and hearing him sing them to his guitar was the only amusement which I was capable of receiving. Theodore perceived well enough that something preyed upon my mind; but as I concealed the cause of my grief

even from him, respect would not permit him to pry into my secrets.

One evening I was lying upon my sofa, plunged in reflections very far from agreeable: Theodore amused himself by observing from the window a battle between two postillions, who were quarrelling in the inn-yard.

"Ha! ha!" cried he suddenly, "yonder is the Great Mogul."

"Who?" said I.

"Only a man who made me a strange speech at Munich."

"What was the purport of it?"

"Now you put me in mind of it, Segnor, it was a kind of message to you, but truly it was not worth delivering. I believe the fellow to be mad, for my part. When I came to Munich in search of you, I found him living at 'the King of the Romans,' and the host gave me an odd account of him. By his accent he is supposed to be a foreigner, but of what country nobody can tell. He seemed to have no acquaintance in the town, spoke very seldom, and never was seen to smile. He had neither servants nor baggage; but his purse seemed well furnished, and he did much good in the town. Some supposed him to be an Arabian astrologer, others to be a travelling mountebank, and many declared that he was Doctor Faustus, whom the devil had sent back to Germany. The landlord, however, told me, that he had the best reasons to believe him to be the Great Mogul incognito."

"But the strange speech, Theodore——"

"True, I had almost forgotten the speech:

indeed, for that matter, it would not have been a great loss if I had forgotten it altogether. You are to know, Segnor, that while I was enquiring about you of the landlord, this stranger passed by. He stopped, and looked at me earnestly—'Youth,' said he, in a solemn voice, 'he whom you seek has found that which he would fain lose. My hand alone can dry up the blood. Bid your master wish for me when the clock strikes "one."'"

"How?" cried I, starting from my sofa. [The words which Theodore had repeated, seemed to imply the stranger's knowledge of my secret.] "Fly to him, my boy! Entreat him to grant me one moment's conversation."

Theodore was surprised at the vivacity of my manner: however, he asked no questions, but hastened to obey me. I waited his return impatiently. But a short space of time had elapsed, when he again appeared, and ushered the expected guest into my chamber. He was a man of majestic presence; his countenance was strongly marked, and his eyes were large, black, and sparkling: yet there was a something in his look, which, the moment that I saw him, inspired me with a secret awe, not to say horror. He was dressed plainly, his hair hung wildly upon his brow, and a band of black velvet, which encircled his forehead, spread over his features an additional gloom. His countenance wore the marks of profound melancholy, his step was slow, and his manner grave, stately, and solemn.

He saluted me with politeness; and having replied to the usual compliments of introduction,

he motioned to Theodore to quit the chamber. The page instantly withdrew.

"I know your business," said he, without giving me time to speak. "I have the power of releasing you from your nightly visitor; but this cannot be done before Sunday. On the hour when the sabbath morning breaks, spirits of darkness have least influence over mortals. After Saturday the nun shall visit you no more."

"May I not enquire," said I, "by what means you are in possession of a secret, which I have carefully concealed from the knowledge of every one?"

"How can I be ignorant of your distresses, when their cause at this moment stands beside you?"

I started. The stranger continued.

"Though to you only visible for one hour in twenty-four, neither day or night does she ever quit you; nor will she ever quit you till you have granted her request."

"And what is that request?"

"That she must herself explain: it lies not in my knowledge. Wait with patience for the night of Saturday: all shall be then cleared up."

I dared not press him further. He soon after changed the conversation, and talked of various matters. He named people who had ceased to exist for many centuries, and yet with whom he appeared to have been personally acquainted. I could not mention a country, however distant, which he had not visited, nor could I sufficiently admire the extent and variety of his information. I remarked to him, that having travelled, seen and known so much, must have given him infinite pleasure. He shook his head mournfully.

"No one," he replied, "is adequate to comprehending the misery of my lot! Fate obliges me to be constantly in movement; I am not permitted to pass more than a fortnight in the same place. I have no friend in the world, and, from the restlessness of my destiny, I never can acquire one. Fain would I lay down my miserable life, for I envy those who enjoy the quiet of the grave: but death eludes me, and flies from my embrace. In vain do I throw myself in the way of danger. I plunge into the ocean; the waves throw me back with abhorrence upon the shore: I rush into fire; the flames recoil at my approach: I oppose myself to the fury of banditti; their swords become blunted, and break against my breast. The hungry tiger shudders at my approach, and the alligator flies from a monster more horrible than itself. God has set his seal upon me, and all his creatures respect this fatal mark."

He put his hand to the velvet which was bound round his forehead. There was in his eyes an expression of fury, despair, and malevolence, that struck horror to my very soul. An involuntary convulsion made me shudder. The stranger perceived it.

"Such is the curse imposed on me," he continued: "I am doomed to inspire all who look on me with terror and detestation. You already feel the influence of the charm, and with every succeeding moment will feel it more. I will not add to your sufferings by my presence. Farewell till Saturday. As soon as the clock strikes twelve, expect me at your chamber-door."

Having said this he departed, leaving me in

astonishment at the mysterious turn of his manner and conversation. His assurances that I should soon be relieved from the apparition's visits, produced a good effect upon my constitution. Theodore, whom I rather treated as an adopted child than as a domestic, was surprised at his return to observe the amendment in my looks. He congratulated me on this symptom of returning health, and declared himself delighted at my having received so much benefit from my conference with the Great Mogul. Upon enquiry I found that the stranger had already passed eight days in Ratisbon. According to his own account, therefore, he was only to remain there six days longer. Saturday was still at the distance of three. Oh! with what impatience did I expect its arrival! In the interim, the bleeding nun continued her nocturnal visits; but hoping soon to be released from them altogether, the effects which they produced on me became less violent than before.

The wished-for night arrived. To avoid creating suspicion I retired to bed at my usual hour. But as soon as my attendants had left me, I dressed myself again, and prepared for the stranger's reception. He entered my room upon the turn of midnight. A small chest was in his hand, which he placed near the stove. He saluted me without speaking; I returned the compliment, observing an equal silence. He then opened his chest. The first thing which he produced was a small wooden crucifix: he knelt down and gazed upon it mournfully, and cast his eyes towards heaven. He seemed to be praying devoutly. At length he bowed his head respectfully, kissed

Step not out of the circle.

the crucifix thrice, and quitted his kneeling posture. He next drew from the chest a covered goblet: with the liquor which it contained, and which appeared to be blood, he sprinkled the floor; and then dipping in it one end of the crucifix, he described a circle in the middle of the room. Round about this he placed various reliques, skull, thigh-bones, etc. I observed, that he disposed them all in the forms of crosses. Lastly, he took out a large Bible, and beckoned me to follow him into the circle. I obeyed.

"Be cautious not to utter a syllable!" whispered the stranger: "step not out of the circle, and, as you love yourself, dare not to look upon my face!"

Holding the crucifix in one hand, the Bible in the other, he seemed to read with profound attention. The clock struck one! As usual I heard the spectre's steps upon the staircase: but I was not seized with the accustomed shivering. I waited her approach with confidence. She entered the room, drew near the circle, and stopped. The stranger muttered some words, to me unintelligible. Then raising his head from the book, and extending the crucifix towards the ghost, he pronounced, in a voice distinct and solemn,

"Beatrice! Beatrice! Beatrice!"

"What wouldst thou?" replied the apparition in a hollow, faltering tone.

"What disturbs thy sleep? Why dost thou afflict and torture this youth? How can rest be restored to thy unquiet spirit?"

"I dare not tell! I must not tell! Fain

would I repose in my grave, but stern commands force me to prolong my punishment!"

"Knowest thou this blood? Knowest thou in whose veins it flowed? Beatrice! Beatrice! In his name, I charge thee to answer me."

"I dare not disobey my taskers."

"Darest thou disobey me?"

He spoke in a commanding tone, and drew the sable band from his forehead. In spite of his injunctions to the contrary, curiosity would not suffer me to keep my eyes off his face: I raised them, and beheld a burning cross impressed upon his brow. For the horror with which this object inspired me I cannot account, but I never felt its equal. My senses left me for some moments: a mysterious dread overcame my courage; and had not the exorciser caught my hand, I should have fallen out of the circle.

When I recovered myself, I perceived that the burning cross had produced an effect no less violent upon the spectre. Her countenance expressed reverence and horror, and her visionary limbs were shaken by fear.

"Yes!" she said at length, "I tremble at that mark! I respect it! I obey you! Know then, that my bones lie still unburied: they rot in the obscurity of Lindenberg Hole. None but this youth has the right of consigning them to the grave. His own lips have made over to me his body and his soul: never will I give back his promise, never shall he know a night devoid of terror, unless he engages to collect my mouldering bones, and deposit them in the family vault of his Andalusian castle. Then let thirty masses be

said for the repose of my spirit, and I trouble this world no more. Now let me depart. Those flames are scorching!"

He let the hand drop slowly which held the crucifix, and which till then he had pointed towards her. The apparition bowed her head, and her form melted into air. The exorciser led me out of the circle. He replaced the Bible, etc., in the chest, and then addressed himself to me, who stood near him speechless from astonishment.

"Don Raymond, you have heard the conditions on which repose is promised you. Be it your business to fulfil them to the letter. For me, nothing more remains than to clear up the darkness still spread over the spectre's history, and inform you, that when living Beatrice bore the name of las Cisternas. She was the great-aunt of your grandfather. In quality of your relation, her ashes demand respect from you, though the enormity of her crimes must excite your abhorrence. The nature of those crimes no one is more capable of explaining to you than myself. I was personally acquainted with the holy man who proscribed her nocturnal riots in the castle of Lindenberg, and I hold this narrative from his own lips.

"Beatrice de las Cisternas took the veil at an early age, not by her own choice, but at the express command of her parents. She was then too young to regret the pleasures of which her profession deprived her: but no sooner did her warm and voluptuous character begin to be developed, than she abandoned herself freely to

the impulse of her passions, and seized the first opportunity to procure their gratification. This opportunity was at length presented, after many obstacles which only added new force to her desires. She contrived to elope from the convent, and fled to Germany with the Baron Lindenberg. She lived at his castle several months as his avowed concubine. All Bavaria was scandalised by her impudent and abandoned conduct. Her feasts vied in luxury with Cleopatra's, and Lindenberg became the theatre of the most unbridled debauchery. Not satisfied with displaying the incontinence of a prostitute, she professed herself an atheist: she took every opportunity to scoff at her monastic vows, and loaded with ridicule the most sacred ceremonies of religion.

"Possessed of a character so depraved, she did not long confine her affections to one object. Soon after her arrival at the castle, the baron's younger brother attracted her notice by his strong-marked features, gigantic stature, and herculean limbs. She was not of an humour to keep her inclination long unknown; but she found in Otto von Lindenberg her equal in depravity. He returned her passion just sufficiently to increase it; and when he had worked it up to the desired pitch he fixed the price of his love at his brother's murder. The wretch consented to this horrible agreement. A night was pitched upon for perpetrating the deed. Otto, who resided on a small estate a few miles distant from the castle, promised that, at one in the morning, he would be waiting for her at Lindenberg Hole; that he would bring with him a party of chosen friends, by whose aid he doubted

not being able to make himself master of the castle; and that his next step should be the uniting her hand to his. It was this last promise which over-ruled every scruple of Beatrice, since, in spite of his affection for her, the baron had declared positively, that he never would make her his wife.

"The fatal night arrived. The baron slept in the arms of his perfidious mistress, when the castle bell struck 'one.' Immediately Beatrice drew a dagger from underneath her pillow, and plunged it in her paramour's heart. The baron uttered a single dreadful groan, and expired. The murderess quitted her bed hastily, took a lamp in one hand, in the other the bloody dagger, and bent her course towards the cavern. The porter dared not to refuse opening the gates to one more dreaded in the castle than its master. Beatrice reached Lindenberg Hole unopposed, where, according to promise, she found Otto waiting for her. He received, and listened to her narrative with transport: but ere she had time to ask why he came unaccompanied, he convinced her that he wished for no witnesses to their interview. Anxious to conceal his share in the murder, and to free himself from a woman whose violent and atrocious character made him tremble with reason for his own safety, he had resolved on the destruction of his wretched agent. Rushing upon her suddenly, he wrested the dagger from her hand. He plunged it, still reeking with his brother's blood, in her bosom, and put an end to her existence by repeated blows.

"Otto now succeeded to the barony of Linden-

berg. The murder was attributed solely to the fugitive nun, and no one suspected him to have persuaded her to the action. But though his crime was unpunished by man, God's justice permitted him not to enjoy in peace his blood-stained honours. Her bones lying still unburied in the cave, the restless soul of Beatrice continued to inhabit the castle. Dressed in her religious habit, in memory of her vows broken to heaven, furnished with the dagger which had drunk the blood of her paramour, and holding the lamp which had guided her flying steps, every night did she stand before the bed of Otto. The most dreadful confusion reigned through the castle. The vaulted chambers resounded with shrieks and groans; and the spectre, as she ranged along the antique galleries, uttered an incoherent mixture of prayers and blasphemies. Otto was unable to withstand the shock which he felt at this fearful vision: its horrors increased with every succeeding appearance. His alarm at length became so insupportable, that his heart burst, and one morning he was found in his bed totally deprived of warmth and animation. His death did not put an end to the nocturnal riots. The bones of Beatrice continued to lie unburied, and her ghost continued to haunt the castle.

"The domains of Lindenberg now fell to a distant relation. But, terrified by the accounts given him of the bleeding nun (so was the spectre called by the multitude), the new baron called to his assistance a celebrated exorciser. This holy man succeeded in obliging her to temporary repose: but though she discovered to him her

history, he was not permitted to reveal it to others or cause her skeleton to be removed to hallowed ground. That office was reserved for you; and till your coming her ghost was doomed to wander about the castle, and lament the crime which she had there committed. However, the exorciser obliged her to silence during his life-time. So long as he existed, the haunted chamber was shut up and the spectre was invisible. At his death, which happened in five years after, she again appeared, but only once on every fifth year on the same day and at the same hour when she plunged her knife in the heart of her sleeping lover: she then visited the cavern which held her mouldering skeleton, returned to the castle as soon as the clock struck two, and was seen no more till the next five years had elapsed.

"She was doomed to suffer during the space of a century. That period is past. Nothing now remains but to consign to the grave the ashes of Beatrice. I have been the means of releasing you from your visionary tormentor; and amidst all the sorrows which oppress me, to think that I have been of use to you is some consolation. Youth, farewell! May the ghost of your relation enjoy that rest in the tomb which the Almighty's vengeance has denied to me for ever."

Here the stranger prepared to quit the apartment.

"Stay yet one moment!" said I; "you have satisfied my curiosity with regard to the spectre, but you leave me a prey to yet greater respecting yourself. Deign to inform me to whom I am under such real obligations. You mention cir-

cumstances long past, and people long dead : you were personally acquainted with the exorciser, who, by your own account, has been deceased near a century. How am I to account for this ? What means that burning cross upon your forehead, and why did the sight of it strike such horror to my soul ? "

On these points he for some time refused to satisfy me. At length, overcome by my entreaties, he consented to clear up the whole, on condition that I would defer his explanation till the next day. With this request I was obliged to comply, and he left me. In the morning my first care was to enquire after the mysterious stranger. Conceive my disappointment, when informed that he had quitted Ratisbon. I despatched messengers in pursuit of him, but in vain. No traces of the fugitive were discovered. Since that moment I never have heard any more of him, and 'tis most probable that I never shall."

[Lorenzo here interrupted his friend's narrative.]

" How ! " said he, " you have never discovered who he was, or even formed a guess ? "

" Pardon me," replied the marquis ; " when I related this adventure to my uncle, the cardinal-duke, he told me, that he had no doubt of the singular man's being the celebrated character known universally by the name of *the wandering Jew*.[1] His not being permitted to pass more than

[1] I imagined the tradition of the Wandering Jew to be known universally ; but as so many people have expressed to me their ignorance on the subject, it may be as well to state that the Wandering Jew is said to have insulted our Saviour, while leading to the

fourteen days on the same spot, the burning cross impressed upon his forehead, the effect which it produced upon the beholders, and many other circumstances, gave this supposition the colour of truth. The cardinal is fully persuaded of it; and for my own part I am inclined to adopt the only solution which offers itself to this riddle." I return to the narrative from which I have disgressed.]

From this period I recovered my health so rapidly as to astonish my physicians. The bleeding nun appeared no more, and I was soon able to set out for Lindenberg. The baron received me with open arms. I confided to him the sequel of my adventure; and he was not a little pleased to find that his mansion would be no longer troubled with the phantom's quinquennial visits. I was sorry to perceive, that absence had not weakened Donna Rodolpha's imprudent passion. In a private conversation which I had with her during my short stay at the castle, she renewed her attempts to persuade me to return her affection. Regarding her as the primary cause of all my sufferings, I entertained for her no other sentiment than disgust. The skeleton of Beatrice was found in the place which she had mentioned. This being all that I sought at Lindenberg, I hastened to quit the baron's domains, equally anxious to perform the obsequies of the murdered nun, and escape the importunity of a woman whom I de-

Cross, saying, "Go, go, thou King of the Jews!" On which Christ, looking at him, answered—"Yea, I go; but thou shalt tarry till I come again!" (Footnote in 2nd Edition.)

tested. I departed, followed by Donna Rodolpha's menaces, that my contempt should not be long unpunished.

I now bent my course towards Spain with all diligence. Lucas with my baggage had joined me during my abode at Lindenberg. I arrived in my native country without any accident, and immediately proceeded to my father's castle in Andalusia. The remains of Beatrice were deposited in the family vault, all due ceremonies performed, and the number of masses said which she had required. Nothing now hindered me from employing all my endeavours to discover the retreat of Agnes. The baroness had assured me that her niece had already taken the veil: this intelligence I suspected to have been forged by jealousy, and hoped to find my mistress still at liberty to accept my hand. I enquired after her family; I found that before her daughter could reach Madrid, Donna Inesilla was no more: you, my dear Lorenzo, were said to be abroad, but where I could not discover: your father was in a distant province on a visit to the Duke de Medina; and as to Agnes, no one could or would inform me what was become of her. Theodore, according to promise, had returned to Strasbourg, where he found his grandfather dead, and Marguerite in possession of his fortune. All her persuasions to remain with her were fruitless: he quitted her a second time, and followed me to Madrid. He exerted himself to the utmost in forwarding my search: but our united endeavours were unattended by success. The retreat which concealed Agnes remained an impenetrable mystery, and

I began to abandon all hopes of recovering her.

About eight months ago I was returning to my hotel in a melancholy humour, having passed the evening at the play-house. The night was dark, and I was unaccompanied. Plunged in reflections, which were far from being agreeable, I perceived not that three men had followed me from the theatre, till, on turning into an unfrequented street, they all attacked me at the same time with the utmost fury. I sprang back a few paces, drew my sword, and threw my cloak over my left arm. The obscurity of the night was in my favour. For the most part the blows of the assassins, being aimed at random, failed to touch me. I at length was fortunate enough to lay one of my adversaries at my feet: but before this I had already received so many wounds, and was so warmly pressed, that my destruction would have been inevitable, had not the clashing of swords called a cavalier to my assistance. He ran towards me with his sword drawn: several domestics followed him with torches. His arrival made the combat equal: yet would not the bravoes abandon their design, till the servants were on the point of joining us. They then fled away, and we lost them in the obscurity.

The stranger now addressed himself to me with politeness, and enquired whether I was wounded. Faint with the loss of blood, I could scarcely thank him for his seasonable aid, and entreat him to let some of his servants convey me to the hotel de las Cisternas. I no sooner mentioned the name than he professed himself an acquaintance of my

father's, and declared that he would not permit my being transported to such a distance before my wounds had been examined. He added, that his house was hard by, and begged me to accompany him thither. His manner was so earnest, that I could not reject his offer; and, leaning upon his arm, a few minutes brought me to the porch of a magnificent hotel.

On entering the house, an old grey-headed domestic came to welcome my conductor: he enquired when the duke, his master, meant to quit the country, and was answered, that he would remain there yet some months. My deliverer then desired the family surgeon to be summoned without delay: his orders were obeyed. I was seated up on a sofa in a noble apartment; and my wounds being examined, they were declared to be very slight. The surgeon, however, advised me not to expose myself to the night air; and the stranger pressed me so earnestly to take a bed in his house, that I consented to remain where I was for the present.

Being now left alone with my deliverer, I took the opportunity of thanking him in more express terms than I had done hitherto; but he begged me to be silent upon the subject.

"I esteem myself happy," said he, "in having had it in my power to render you this little service; and I shall think myself eternally obliged to my daughter for detaining me so late at the convent of St. Clare. The high esteem in which I have ever held the Marquis de las Cisternas, though accident has not permitted our being so intimate as I could wish, makes me rejoice in the opportunity

of making his son's acquaintance. I am certain that my brother, in whose house you now are, will lament his not being at Madrid to receive you himself: but, in the duke's absence, I am master of the family, and may assure you, in his name, that everything in the hotel de Medina is perfectly at your disposal."

Conceive my surprise, Lorenzo, at discovering, in the person of my preserver, Don Gaston de Medina. It was only to be equalled by my secret satisfaction at the assurance that Agnes inhabited the convent of St. Clare. This latter sensation was not a little weakened, when, in answer to my seemingly indifferent questions, he told me that his daughter had really taken the veil. I suffered not my grief at this circumstance to take root in my mind: I flattered myself with the idea that my uncle's credit at the court of Rome would remove this obstacle, and that, without difficulty, I should obtain for my mistress a dispensation from her vows. Buoyed up with this hope, I calmed the uneasiness of my bosom; and I redoubled my endeavours to appear grateful for the attention, and pleased with the society, of Don Gaston.

A domestic now entered the room, and informed me that the bravo whom I had wounded discovered some signs of life. I desired that he might be carried to my father's hotel, and said that, as soon as he recovered his voice, I would examine him respecting his reasons for attempting my life. I was answered, that he was already able to speak, though with difficulty. Don Gaston's curiosity made him press me to interrogate the assassin

in his presence; but this curiosity I was by no means inclined to gratify. One reason was that, suspecting from whence the blow came, I was unwilling to place before Don Gaston's eyes the guilt of a sister. Another was, that I feared to be recognised for Alphonso d'Alvarada, and precautions taken in consequence to keep me from the sight of Agnes. To avow my passion for his daughter, and endeavour to make him enter into my schemes, what I knew of Don Gaston's character convinced me would be an imprudent step; and considering it to be essential that he should know me for no other than the Condé de las Cisternas, I was determined not to let him hear the bravo's confession. I insinuated to him, that as I suspected a lady to be concerned in the business, whose name might accidentally escape from the assassin, it was necessary for me to examine the man in private. Don Gaston's delicacy would not permit his urging the point any longer, and, in consequence, the bravo was conveyed to my hotel.

The next morning I took leave of my host, who was to return to the duke on the same day. My wounds had been so trifling, that, except being obliged to wear my arm in a sling for a short time, I felt no inconvenience from the night's adventure. The surgeon who examined the bravo's wound declared it to be mortal: he had just time to confess, that he had been instigated to murder me by the revengeful Donna Rodolpha, and expired in a few minutes after.

All my thoughts were now bent upon getting to the speech of my lovely nun. Theodore set

himself to work, and for this time, with better success. He attacked the gardener of St. Clare so forcibly with bribes and promises, that the old man was entirely gained over to my interests; and it was settled that I should be introduced into the convent in the character of his assistant. The plan was put into execution without delay. Disguised in a common habit, and a black patch covering one of my eyes, I was presented to the lady prioress, who condescended to approve of the gardener's choice. I immediately entered upon my employment. Botany having been a favourite study with me, I was by no means at a loss in my new station. For some days I continued to work in the convent-garden without meeting the object of my disguise. On the fourth morning I was more successful. I heard the voice of Agnes, and was speeding towards the sound, when the sight of the domina stopped me. I drew back with caution, and concealed myself behind a thick clump of trees.

The prioress advanced, and seated herself with Agnes on a bench at no great distance. I heard her in an angry tone, blame her companion's continual melancholy. She told her, that to weep the loss of any lover, in her situation, was a crime; but that to weep the loss of a faithless one was folly and absurdity in the extreme. Agnes replied in so low a voice that I could not distinguish her words, but I perceived that she used terms of gentleness and submission. The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a young pensioner, who informed the domina that she was waited for in the parlour. The old lady rose,

kissed the cheek of Agnes, and retired. The new-comer remained. Agnes spoke much to her in praise of somebody whom I could not make out; but her auditor seemed highly delighted, and interested by the conversation. The nun showed her several letters: the other perused them with evident pleasure, obtained permission to copy them, and withdrew for that purpose to my great satisfaction.

No sooner was she out of sight, than I quitted my concealment. Fearing to alarm my lovely mistress, I drew near her gently, intending to discover myself by degrees. But who for a moment can deceive the eyes of love? She raised her head at my approach and recognised me, in spite of my disguise, at a single glance. She rose hastily from her seat with an exclamation of surprise, and attempted to retire: but I followed her, detained her, and entreated to be heard. Persuaded of my falsehood, she refused to listen to me, and ordered me positively to quit the garden. It was now my turn to refuse. I protested that, however dangerous might be the consequences, I would not leave her till she had heard my justification. I assured her, that she had been deceived by the artifices of her relations: that I could convince her, beyond the power of doubt, that my passion had been pure and disinterested; and I asked her what should induce me to seek her in the convent, were I influenced by the selfish motives which my enemies had ascribed to me.

My prayers, my arguments, and vows not to quit her till she had promised to listen to me,

united to her fears lest the nuns should see me with her, to her natural curiosity, and to the affection which she still felt for me, in spite of my supposed desertion, at length prevailed. She told me, that to grant my request at that moment was impossible; but she engaged to be in the same spot at eleven that night, and to converse with me for the last time. Having obtained this promise I released her hand, and she fled back with rapidity towards the convent.

I communicated my success to my ally, the old gardener: he pointed out an hiding-place where I might shelter myself till night without fear of a discovery. Thither I betook myself at the hour when I ought to have retired with my supposed master, and waited impatiently for the appointed time. The chillness of the night was in my favour, since it kept the other nuns confined to their cells. Agnes alone was insensible of the inclemency of the air, and, before eleven, joined me at the spot which had witnessed our former interview. Secure from interruption I related to her the true cause of my disappearing on the fatal fifth of May. She was evidently much affected by my narrative. When it was concluded she confessed the injustice of her suspicions, and blamed herself for having taken the veil through despair at my ingratitude.

"But now it is too late to repine!" she added; "the die is thrown: I have pronounced my vows, and dedicated myself to the service of heaven. I am sensible how ill I am calculated for a convent. My disgust at a monastic life increases daily;

ennui and discontent are my constant companions; and I will not conceal from you that the passion which I formerly felt for one so near being my husband is not yet extinguished in my bosom: but we must part! Insuperable barriers divide us from each other, and on this side the grave we must never meet again!"

I now exerted myself to prove that our union was not so impossible as she seemed to think it. I vaunted to her the cardinal-duke of Lerma's influence at the court of Rome. I assured her that I should easily obtain a dispensation from her vows; and I doubted not but Don Gaston would coincide with my views, when informed of my real name and long attachment. Agnes replied that since I encouraged such an hope I could know but little of her father. Liberal and kind in every other respect, superstition formed the only stain upon his character. Upon this head he was inflexible: he sacrificed his dearest interests to his scruples, and would consider it an insult to suppose him capable of authorising his daughter to break her vows to heaven.

"But suppose," said I, interrupting her—"suppose that he should disapprove of our union: let him remain ignorant of my proceedings till I have rescued you from the prison in which you are now confined. Once my wife, you are free from his authority; I need from him no pecuniary assistance, and when he sees his resentment to be unavailing, he will doubtless restore you to his favour. But, let the worst happen; should Don Gaston be irreconcilable, my relations will vie with each other in making you forget his loss;

and you will find in my father a substitute for the parent of whom I shall deprive you."

"Don Raymond," replied Agnes, in a firm and resolute voice, "I love my father: he has treated me harshly in this one instance; but I have received from him, in every other, so many proofs of love, that his affection is become necessary to my existence. Were I to quit the convent he never would forgive me; nor can I think that, on his death-bed, he would leave me his curse, without shuddering at the very idea. Besides, I am conscious myself that my vows are binding. Wilfully did I contract my engagement with heaven: I cannot break it without a crime. Then banish from your mind the idea of our being ever united. I am devoted to religion; and however I may grieve at our separation, I would oppose obstacles myself to what I feel would render me guilty."

I strove to over-rule these ill-grounded scruples. We were still disputing upon the subject when the convent bell summoned the nuns to matins. Agnes was obliged to attend them; but she left me not till I had compelled her to promise that on the following night she would be at the same place at the same hour. These meetings continued for several weeks uninterrupted: and 'tis now, Lorenzo, that I must implore your indulgence. Reflect upon our situation, our youth, our long attachment. Weigh all the circumstances which attended our assignations, and you will confess the temptation to have been irresistible: you will even pardon me when I acknowledge that in an unguarded moment the honour of Agnes was sacrificed to my passion.

[Lorenzo's eyes sparkled with fury; a deep crimson spread itself over his face: he started from his seat, and attempted to draw his sword. The marquis was aware of his movement, and caught his hand: he pressed it affectionately:

"My friend! my brother! hear me to the conclusion! Till then restrain your passion; and be at least convinced that if what I have related is criminal, the blame must fall upon me, and not upon your sister."

Lorenzo suffered himself to be prevailed upon by Don Raymond's entreaties: he resumed his place, and listened to the rest of the narrative with a gloomy and impatient countenance. The marquis thus continued:]

Scarcely was the first burst of passion past, when Agnes, recovering herself, started from my arms with horror. She called me infamous seducer, loaded me with the bitterest reproaches, and beat her bosom in all the wildness of delirium. Ashamed of my imprudence, I with difficulty found words to excuse myself. I endeavoured to console her: I threw myself at her feet, and entreated her forgiveness. She forced her hand from me, which I had taken and would have pressed to my lips.

"Touch me not!" she cried, with a violence which terrified me. "Monster of perfidy and ingratitude, how have I been deceived in you! I looked upon you as my friend, my protector: I trusted myself in your hands with confidence, and, relying upon your honour, thought that mine ran no risk: and 'tis by you, whom I adored, that I am covered with infamy! 'Tis by you

that I have been seduced into breaking my vows to God, that I am reduced to a level with the basest of my sex! Shame upon you, villain, you shall never see me more!"

She started from the bank on which she was seated. I endeavoured to detain her; but she disengaged herself from me with violence, and took refuge in the convent.

I retired, filled with confusion and inquietude. The next morning I failed not, as usual, to appear in the garden; but Agnes was nowhere to be seen. At night I waited for her at the place where we generally met. I found no better success. Several days and nights passed away in the same manner. At length I saw my offended mistress cross the walk, on whose borders I was working: she was accompanied by the same young pensioner, on whose arm she seemed, from weakness, obliged to support herself. She looked upon me for a moment, but instantly turned her head away. I waited her return; but she passed on to the convent without paying any attention to me, or the penitent looks with which I implored her forgiveness.

As soon as the nuns were retired, the old gardener joined me with a sorrowful air.

"Segnor," he said, "it grieves me to say that I can be no longer of use to you; the lady whom you used to meet has just assured me, that if I admitted you again into the garden, she would discover the whole business to the lady prioress. She bade me tell you also, that your presence was an insult, and that, if you still possess the least respect for her, you will never attempt to

see her more. Excuse me then for informing you, that I can favour your disguise no longer. Should the prioress be acquainted with my conduct, she might not be contented with dismissing me her service: out of revenge, she might accuse me of having profaned the convent, and cause me to be thrown into the prisons of the Inquisition."

Fruitless were my attempts to conquer his resolution. He denied me all future entrance into the garden; and Agnes persevered in neither letting me see or hear from her. In about a fortnight after, a violent illness which had seized my father obliged me to set out for Andalusia. I hastened thither, and, as I imagined, found the marquis on the point of death. Though, on its first appearance, his complaint was declared mortal, he lingered out several months; during which my attendance upon him in his malady, and the occupation of settling his affairs after his decease, permitted not my quitting Andalusia. Within these four days I returned to Madrid, and on arriving at my hotel, I there found this letter waiting for me.

[Here the marquis unlocked a drawer of a cabinet; he took out a folded paper, which he presented to his auditor. Lorenzo opened it, and recognised his sister's hand. The contents were as follows:—

"Into what an abyss of misery have you plunged me! Raymond, you force me to become as criminal as yourself. I had resolved never to see you more; if possible, to forget you; if not, only to remember you with hate. A being, for

whom I already feel a mother's tenderness, solicits me to pardon my seducer, and apply to his love for the means of preservation. Raymond, your child lives in my bosom. I tremble at the vengeance of the prioress. I tremble much for myself, yet more for the innocent creature whose existence depends upon mine. Both of us are lost, should my situation be discovered. Advise me, then, what steps to take, but seek not to see me. The gardener, who undertakes to deliver this, is dismissed, and we have nothing to hope from that quarter. The man engaged in his place is of incorruptible fidelity. The best means of conveying me your answer, is by concealing it under the great statue of St. Francis, which stands in the Capuchin cathedral; thither I go every Thursday to confession, and shall early have an opportunity of securing your letter. I hear that you are now absent from Madrid. Need I entreat you write the very moment of your return? I will not think of it. Ah! Raymond! mine is a cruel situation! Deceived by my nearest relations, compelled to embrace a profession, the duties of which I am ill calculated to perform, conscious of the sanctity of those duties, and seduced into violating them by one whom I least suspected of perfidy, I am now obliged, by circumstances, to choose between death and perjury. Woman's timidity, and maternal affection, permit me not to balance in the choice. I feel all the guilt into which I plunge myself when I yield to the plan which you before proposed to me. My poor father's death, which has taken place since we met, has removed one obstacle. He sleeps in his

grave, and I no longer dread his anger. But from the anger of God, oh! Raymond! who shall shield me? Who can protect me against my conscience, against myself? I dare not dwell upon these thoughts; they will drive me mad. I have taken my resolution. Procure a dispensation from my vows. I am ready to fly with you. Write to me, my husband! Tell me that absence has not abated your love! Tell me that you will rescue from death your unborn child, and its unhappy mother. I live in all the agonies of terror. Every eye which is fixed upon me, seems to read my secret and my shame. And you are the cause of those agonies! Oh! when my heart first loved you, how little did it suspect you of making it feel such pangs!

"AGNES."

Having perused the letter, Lorenzo restored it in silence. The marquis replaced it in the cabinet, and then proceeded:]

Excessive was my joy at reading this intelligence, so earnestly desired, so little expected. My plan was soon arranged. When Don Gaston discovered to me his daughter's retreat, I entertained no doubt of her readiness to quit the convent: I had, therefore, entrusted the cardinal-duke of Lerma with the whole affair, who immediately busied himself in obtaining the necessary bull. Fortunately, I had afterwards neglected to stop his proceedings. Not long since I received a letter from him, stating that he expected daily to receive the order from the court of Rome. Upon this I would willingly have relied; but the cardinal

wrote me word that I must find some means of conveying Agnes out of the convent, unknown to the prioress. He doubted not but this latter would be much incensed by losing a person of such high rank from her society, and consider the renunciation of Agnes as an insult to her house. He represented her as a woman of a violent and revengeful character, capable of proceeding to the greatest extremities. It was therefore to be feared lest, by confining Agnes in the convent, she should frustrate my hopes, and render the pope's mandate unavailing. Influenced by this consideration I resolved to carry off my mistress, and conceal her till the arrival of the expected bull in the cardinal-duke's estate. He approved of my design, and professed himself ready to give a shelter to the fugitive. I next caused the new gardener of St. Clare to be seized privately, and confined in my hotel. By this means I became master of the key to the garden-door, and I had now nothing more to do than prepare Agnes for the elopement. This was done by the letter which you saw me deliver this evening. I told her in it that I should be ready to receive her at twelve to-morrow night; that I had secured the key of the garden, and that she might depend upon a speedy release.

You have now, Lorenzo, heard the whole of my long narrative. I have nothing to say in my excuse, save that my intentions towards your sister have been ever the most honourable: that it has always been, and still is, my design to make her my wife; and that I trust, when you consider these circumstances, our youth, and our attach-

ment, you will not only forgive our momentary lapse from virtue, but will aid me in repairing my faults to Agnes, and securing a lawful title to her person and her heart.[1]

[1] There is certainly a very strong resemblance between some parts of the story of "the Bleeding Nun," and that of the apparition in *Les Chevaliers du Cygne.* I can only account for it by supposing that Madame de Genlis had heard, while in Germany, the same tradition which I have made use of. It is at least certain that *The Monk* was already in the Press when I read for the first time *Les Chevaliers du Cygne.* The story which was related to me was merely that the Castle of Lauenstein was haunted by a spectre habited as a Nun (but not as a bleeding one); that a young officer by mistake ran away with her instead of the heiress of Lauenstein; that she used to appear to him every night; that on going to a foreign country, neither he nor the phantom was ever after heard of; and that the words she used to repeat to him were, in the original—

"Frizchen! Frizchen! du bist mein!
"Frizchen! Frizchen! Ich bin dein!
"Ich dein!
"Du mein!
"Mit leib' und seel!"

(Footnote to 2nd Edition.)

CHAPTER V

O you! whom Vanity's light bark conveys
On Fame's mad voyage by the wind of Praise,
With what a shifting gale your course you ply,
For ever sunk too low, or borne too high!
Who pants for glory, finds but short repose:
A breath revives him, and a breath o'erthrows.

POPE.

HERE the marquis concluded his adventures. Lorenzo, before he could determine on his reply, passed some moments in reflection. At length he broke silence.

"Raymond," said he, taking his hand, "strict honour would oblige me to wash off in your blood the stain thrown upon my family; but the circumstances of your case forbid me to consider you as an enemy. The temptation was too great to be resisted. 'Tis the superstition of my relations which has occasioned these misfortunes, and they are more the offenders than yourself and Agnes. What has passed between you cannot be recalled, but may yet be repaired by uniting you to my sister. You have ever been, you still continue to be, my dearest, and indeed my only friend. I feel for Agnes the truest affection, and there is no one on whom I would bestow her more willingly than yourself. Pursue, then, your design. I will accompany you to-morrow night, and conduct her myself to the house of the cardinal. My

presence will be a sanction for her conduct, and prevent her incurring blame by her flight from the convent."

The marquis thanked him in terms by no means deficient in gratitude. Lorenzo then informed him, that he had nothing more to apprehend from Donna Rodolpha's enmity. Five months had already elapsed since, in an access of passion, she broke a blood-vessel, and expired in the course of a few hours. He then proceeded to mention the interests of Antonia. The marquis was much surprised at hearing of this new relation. His father had carried his hatred of Elvira to the grave, and had never given the least hint that he knew what was become of his eldest son's widow. Don Raymond assured his friend that he was not mistaken in supposing him ready to acknowledge his sister-in-law, and her amiable daughter. The preparations for the elopement would not permit his visiting them the next day; but, in the meanwhile, he desired Lorenzo to assure them of his friendship, and to supply Elvira, upon his account, with any sums which she might want. This the youth promised to do, as soon as her abode should be known to him. He then took leave of his future brother, and returned to the palace de Medina.

The day was already on the point of breaking when the marquis retired to his chamber. Conscious that his narrative would take up some hours, and wishing to secure himself from interruption, on returning to the hotel he ordered his attendants not to sit up for him; consequently, he was somewhat surprised on entering his anti-

room to find Theodore established there. The page sat near a table, with a pen in his hand, and was so totally occupied by his employment that he perceived not his lord's approach. The marquis stopped to observe him. Theodore wrote a few lines, then paused, and scratched out a part of the writing; then wrote again, smiled, and seemed highly pleased with what he had been about. At last he threw down his pen, sprang from his chair and clapped his hands together joyfully.

"There it is!" cried he aloud: "now they are charming!"

His transports were interrupted by a laugh from the marquis, who suspected the nature of his employment.

"What is so charming, Theodore?"

The youth started, and looked round: he blushed, ran to the table, seized the paper on which he had been writing, and concealed it in confusion.

"Oh! my lord, I knew not that you were so near me. Can I be of use to you? Lucas is already gone to bed."

"I shall follow his example when I have given my opinion of your verses."

"My verses, my lord?"

"Nay, I am sure that you have been writing some, for nothing else could have kept you awake till this time of the morning. Where are they, Theodore? I shall like to see your composition."

Theodore's cheeks glowed with still deeper crimson: he longed to show his poetry, but first chose to be pressed for it.

"Indeed, my lord, they are not worthy your attention."

"Not these verses which you just now declared to be so charming? Come, come, let me see whether our opinions are the same. I promise that you shall find in me an indulgent critic."

The boy produced his paper with seeming reluctance; but the satisfaction which sparkled in his dark expressive eyes betrayed the vanity of his youthful bosom. The marquis smiled while he observed the emotions of an heart as yet but little skilled in veiling its sentiments. He seated himself upon a sofa. Theodore, while hope and fear contended on his anxious countenance, waited with inquietude for his master's decision, while the marquis read the following lines:

LOVE AND AGE.

The night was dark; the wind blew cold;
Anacreon, grown morose and old,
Sat by his fire, and fed the kindly flame:
Sudden the cottage door expands,
And, lo! before him Cupid stands,
Casts round a friendly glance, and greets him by his name.

"What, is it thou?" the startled sire
In sullen tone exclaimed, while ire
With crimson flushed his pale and wrinkled cheek:
"Wouldst thou again with amorous rage
Inflame my bosom? Steeled by age,
Vain boy, to pierce my breast thine arrows are too weak.

"What seek you in this desert drear?
No smiles or sports inhabit here;
Ne'er did these valleys witness dalliance sweet:

Eternal winter binds the plains;
Age in my house despotic reigns;
My garden boasts no flower, my bosom boasts no heat.

"Begone, and seek the blooming bower,
Where some ripe virgin courts thy power,
Or bid provoking dreams flit round her bed;
On Damon's amorous breast repose;
Wanton on Chloe's lip of rose,
Or make her blushing cheek a pillow for thy head.

"Be such thy haunts! These regions cold
Avoid! Nor think grown wise and old
This hoary head again thy yoke shall bear:
Remembering that my fairest years
By thee were marked with sighs and tears,
I think thy friendship false, and shun the guileful snare.

"I have not yet forgot the pains
I felt, while bound in Julia's chains:
The ardent flames with which my bosom burned;
The nights I passed deprived of rest;
The jealous pangs which racked my breast;
My disappointed hopes, and passion unreturned.

"Then fly, and curse mine eyes no more!
Fly from my peaceful cottage door!
No day, no hour, no moment shalt thou stay.
I know thy falsehood, scorn thy arts,
Distrust thy smiles, and fear thy darts:
Traitor, begone, and seek some other to betray!"—

"Does age, old man, your wits confound?"
Replied the offended god, and frowned:
(His frown was sweet as is the virgin's smile!)
"Do you to me these words address?
To me who do not love you less,
Though you my friendship scorn, and pleasures past revile.

"If one proud fair you chanced to find,
An hundred other nymphs were kind,
Whose smiles might well for Julia's frowns atone:
But such is man! his partial hand
Unnumbered favours writes on sand,
But stamps one little fault on solid lasting stone.

"Ingrate! Who led you to the wave,
At noon where Lesbia loved to lave?
Who named the bower alone where Daphne lay?
And who, when Celia shrieked for aid,
Bade you with kisses hush the maid?
What other was't than Love, oh! false Anacreon, say?

"Then you could call me—'Gentle boy!
'My only bliss! my source of joy!'
Then you could prize me dearer than your soul!
Could kiss, and dance me on your knees;
And swear, not wine itself would please,
Had not the lip of Love first touched the flowing bowl!

"Must those sweet days return no more?
Must I for aye your loss deplore,
Banished your heart, and from your favour driven?
Ah! no; my fears that smile denies;
That heaving breast, those sparkling eyes
Declare me ever dear, and all my faults forgiven.

"Again beloved, esteemed, caressed,
Cupid shall in thine arms be pressed,
Sport on thy knees, or on thy bosom sleep:
My torch thine age-struck heart shall warm;
My hand pale winter's rage disarm,
And Youth and Spring shall here once more their revels keep."—

A feather now of golden hue
He smiling from his pinions drew;
This to the poet's hand the boy commits;

And straight before Anacreon's eyes
The fairest dreams of fancy rise,
And round his favoured head wild inspiration flits.

His bosom glows with amorous fire;
Eager he grasps the magic lyre;
Swift o'er the tuneful chords his fingers move:
The feather plucked from Cupid's wing
Sweeps the too-long neglected string,
While soft Anacreon sings the power and praise of love.

Soon as that name was heard, the woods
Shook off their snows; the melting floods
Broke their cold chains, and winter fled away.
Once more the earth was decked with flowers;
Mild zephyrs breathed through blooming bowers;
High towered the glorious sun, and poured the blaze of day.

Attracted by the harmonious sound,
Sylvans and fauns the cot surround,
And curious crowd the minstrel to behold:
The wood-nymphs haste the spell to prove;
Eager they run; they list, they love,
And, while they hear the strain, forget the man is old.

Cupid, to nothing constant long,
Perched on the harp attends the song,
Or stifles with a kiss the dulcet notes:
Now on the poet's breast reposes,
Now twines his hoary locks with roses,
Or borne on wings of gold in wanton circle floats.

Then thus Anacreon—"I no more
At other shrines my vows will pour,
Since Cupid deigns my numbers to inspire:
From Phœbus or the blue-eyed maid
Now shall my verse request no aid,
For love alone shall be the patron of my lyre.

"In lofty strain, of earlier days,
I spread the king's or hero's praise,
And struck the martial chords with epic fire:
But farewell, hero! farewell, king!
Your deeds my lips no more shall sing,
For Love alone shall be the subject of my lyre." [1]

The marquis returned the paper with a smile of encouragement.

"Your little poem pleases me much," said he: "however, you must not count my opinion for anything. I am no judge of verses, and for my own part never composed more than six lines in my life: those six produced so unlucky an effect, that I am fully resolved never to compose another. But I wander from my subject. I was going to say that you cannot employ your time worse than in making verses. An author, whether good or bad, or between both, is an animal whom everybody is privileged to attack; for though all are not able to write books, all conceive themselves able to judge them. A bad composition carries with it its own punishment—contempt and ridicule. A good one excites envy, and entails upon its author a thousand mortifications: he finds himself assailed by partial and ill-humoured criticism: one man finds faults with the plan, another with the style, a third with the precept which it strives to inculcate; and they who cannot succeed in finding fault with the book, employ themselves in stigmatising its author. They maliciously rake out from obscurity every little circumstance which may throw ridicule

[1] The last stanza is taken from the first Ode of Anacreon. (Footnote in 2nd Edition.)

upon his private character or conduct, and aim at wounding the man since they cannot hurt the writer. In short, to enter the lists of literature is wilfully to expose yourself to the arrows of neglect, ridicule, envy, and disappointment. Whether you write well or ill, be assured that you will not escape from blame. Indeed this circumstance contains a young author's chief consolation: he remembers that Lope de Vega and Calderona had unjust and envious critics, and he modestly conceives himself to be exactly in their predicament. But I am conscious that all these sage observations are thrown away upon you. Authorship is a mania, to conquer which no reasons are sufficiently strong; and you might as easily persuade me not to love, as I persuade you not to write. However, if you cannot help being occasionally seized with a poetical paroxysm, take at least the precaution of communicating your verses to none but those whose partiality for you secures their approbation."

"Then, my lord, you do not think these lines tolerable?" said Theodore, with an humble and dejected air.

"You mistake my meaning. As I said before, they have pleased me much: but my regard for you makes me partial, and others might judge them less favourably. I must still remark, that even my prejudice in your favour does not blind me so much as to prevent my observing several faults. For instance, you make a terrible confusion of metaphors; you are too apt to make the strength of your lines consist more in the words than sense; some of the verses seem

introduced only in order to rhyme with others; and most of the best ideas are borrowed from other poets, though possibly you are unconscious of the theft yourself. These faults may occasionally be excused in a work of length; but a short poem must be correct and perfect."

"All this is true, Segnor; but you should consider that I only write for pleasure."

"Your defects are the less excusable. Their incorrectness may be forgiven, who work for money, who are obliged to complete a given task in a given time, and are paid according to the bulk, not value, of their productions. But in those whom no necessity forces to turn author, who merely write for fame, and have full leisure to polish their compositions, faults are unpardonable, and merit the sharpest arrows of criticism."

The marquis rose from the sofa; the page looked discouraged and melancholy; and this did not escape his master's observation.

"However," added he, smiling, "I think that these lines do you no discredit. Your versification is tolerably easy, and your ear seems to be just. The perusal of your little poem upon the whole gave me much pleasure; and if it is not asking too great a favour, I shall be highly obliged to you for a copy."

The youth's countenance immediately cleared up. He perceived not the smile, half approving, half ironical, which accompanied the request, and he promised the copy with great readiness. The marquis withdrew to his chamber, much amused by the instantaneous effect produced upon Theodore's vanity by the conclusion of his criticism.

He threw himself upon his couch, sleep soon stole over him, and his dreams presented him with the most flattering pictures of happiness with Agnes.

On reaching the hotel de Medina, Lorenzo's first care was to enquire for letters. He found several waiting for him ; but that which he sought was not amongst them. Leonella had found it impossible to write that evening. However, her impatience to secure Don Christoval's heart, on which she flattered herself with having made no slight impression, permitted her not to pass another day without informing him where she was to be found. On her return from the Capuchin church, she had related to her sister, with exultation, how attentive an handsome cavalier had been to her ; as also how his companion had undertaken to plead Antonia's cause with the Marquis de las Cisternas. Elvira received this intelligence with sensations very different from those with which it was communicated. She blamed her sister's imprudence in confiding her history to an absolute stranger, and expressed her fears lest this inconsiderate step should prejudice the marquis against her. The greatest of her apprehensions she concealed in her own breast. She had observed, with inquietude, that at the mention of Lorenzo a deep blush spread itself over her daughter's cheek. The timid Antonia dared not to pronounce his name. Without knowing wherefore, she felt embarrassed when he was made the subject of discourse, and endeavoured to change the conversation to Ambrosio. Elvira perceived the emotions of this young bosom : in consequence, she insisted

upon Leonella's breaking her promise to the cavaliers. A sigh, which on hearing this order escaped from Antonia, confirmed the wary mother in her resolution.

Through this resolution Leonella was determined to break: she conceived it to be inspired by envy, and that her sister dreaded her being elevated above her. Without imparting her design to any one, she took an opportunity of despatching the following note to Lorenzo: it was delivered to him as soon as he woke:

"Doubtless, Segnor Don Lorenzo, you have frequently accused me of ingratitude and forgetfulness: but on the word of a virgin it was out of my power to perform my promise yesterday. I know not in what words to inform you, how strange a reception my sister gave your kind wish to visit her. She is an odd woman, with many good points about her; but her jealousy of me frequently makes her conceive notions quite unaccountable. On hearing that your friend had paid some little attention to me, she immediately took the alarm: she blamed my conduct, and has absolutely forbidden me to let you know our abode. My strong sense of gratitude for your kind offers of service, and——shall I confess it? my desire to behold once more the too amiable Don Christoval, will not permit my obeying her injunctions. I have therefore stolen a moment to inform you, that we lodge in the strada di San Iago, four doors from the palace d'Albornos, and nearly opposite to the barber's Miguel Coello. Enquire for Donna Elvira Dalsa,

since, in compliance with her father-in-law's order, my sister continues to be called by her maiden name. At eight this evening you will be sure of finding us: but let not a word drop, which may raise a suspicion of my having written this letter. Should you see the Condé d'Ossorio, tell him——I blush while I declare it——tell him that his presence will be but too acceptable to the sympathetic—LEONELLA.

The latter sentences were written in red ink, to express the blushes of her cheek while she committed an outrage upon her virgin modesty.

Lorenzo had no sooner perused this note, than he set out in search of Don Christoval. Not being able to find him in the course of the day, he proceeded to Donna Elvira's alone, to Leonella's infinite disappointment. The domestic by whom he sent up his name having already declared his lady to be at home, she had no excuse for refusing his visit: yet she consented to receive it with much reluctance. That reluctance was increased by the changes which his approach produced in Antonia's countenance; nor was it by any means abated, when the youth himself appeared. The symmetry of his person, animation of his features, and natural elegance of his manners and address, convinced Elvira that such a guest must be dangerous for her daughter. She resolved to treat him with distant politeness, to decline his services with gratitude for the tender of them, and to make him feel, without offence, that his future visits would be far from acceptable.

On his entrance he found Elvira, who was

indisposed, reclining upon a sofa ; Antonia sat by her embroidery frame ; and Leonella, in a pastoral dress, held *Montemayor's Diana*. In spite of her being the mother of Antonia, Lorenzo could not help expecting to find in Elvira Leonella's true sister, and the daughter of "as honest a painstaking shoemaker as any in Cordova." A single glance was sufficient to undeceive him. He beheld a woman whose features, though impaired by time and sorrow, still bore the marks of distinguished beauty : a serious dignity reigned upon her countenance, but was tempered by a grace and sweetness which rendered her truly enchanting. Lorenzo fancied that she must have resembled her daughter in her youth, and readily excused the imprudence of the late Condé de las Cisternas. She desired him to be seated, and immediately resumed her place upon the sofa.

Antonia received him with a simple reverence, and continued her work : her cheeks were suffused with crimson, and she strove to conceal her emotion by leaning over her embroidery frame. Her aunt also chose to play off her airs of modesty : she affected to blush and tremble, and waited with her eyes cast down to receive, as she expected, the compliments of Don Christoval. Finding, after some time, that no sign of his approach was given, she ventured to look round the room, and perceived with vexation that Medina was unaccompanied. Impatience would not permit her waiting for an explanation : interrupting Lorenzo, who was delivering Raymond's message, she desired to know what was become of his friend.

He, who thought it necessary to maintain him-

self in her good graces, strove to console her under his disappointment by committing a little violence upon truth.

"Ah! Segnora," he replied in a melancholy voice, "how grieved will he be at losing this opportunity of paying you his respects! A relation's illness has obliged him to quit Madrid in haste: but on his return he will doubtless seize the first moment with transport to throw himself at your feet!"

As he said this, his eyes met those of Elvira: she punished his falsehood sufficiently by darting at him a look expressive of displeasure and reproach. Neither did the deceit answer his intention. Vexed and disappointed, Leonella rose from her seat, and retired in dudgeon to her own apartment.

Lorenzo hastened to repair the fault which had injured him in Elvira's opinion. He related his conversation with the marquis respecting her: he assured her that Raymond was prepared to acknowledge her for his brother's widow; and that, till it was in his power to pay his compliments to her in person, Lorenzo was commissioned to supply his place. This intelligence relieved Elvira from an heavy weight of uneasiness: she had now found a protector for the fatherless Antonia, for whose future fortunes she had suffered the greatest apprehensions. She was not sparing of her thanks to him, who had interfered so generously in her behalf; but still she gave him no invitation to repeat his visit. However, when upon rising to depart he requested permission to enquire after her health occasionally,

the polite earnestness of his manner, gratitude for his services, and respect for his friend the marquis, would not admit of a refusal. She consented reluctantly to receive him : he promised not to abuse her goodness, and quitted the house.

Antonia was now left alone with her mother : a temporary silence ensued. Both wished to speak on the same subject, but neither knew how to introduce it. The one felt a bashfulness which sealed up her lips, and for which she could not account ; the other feared to find her apprehensions true, or to inspire her daughter with notions to which she might be still a stranger. At length Elvira began the conversation.

" That is a charming young man, Antonia ; I am much pleased with him. Was he long near you yesterday in the cathedral ? "

" He quitted me not for a moment while I stayed in the church : he gave me his seat, and was very obliging and attentive."

" Indeed ? Why then have you never mentioned his name to me ? Your aunt launched out in praise of his friend, and you vaunted Ambrosio's eloquence : but neither said a word of Don Lorenzo's person and accomplishments. Had not Leonella spoken of his readiness to undertake our cause, I should not have known him to be in existence."

She paused. Antonia coloured, but was silent.

" Perhaps you judge him less favourably than I do. In my opinion his figure is pleasing, his conversation sensible, and manners engaging. Still he may have struck you differently : you may think him disagreeable, and——"

"Disagreeable? Oh! dear mother, how should I possibly think him so? I should be very ungrateful were I not sensible of his kindness yesterday, and very blind if his merits had escaped me. His figure is so graceful, so noble! His manners so gentle, yet so manly! I never yet saw so many accomplishments united in one person, and I doubt whether Madrid can produce his equal."

"Why then were you so silent in praise of this phœnix of Madrid? Why was it concealed from me, that his society had afforded you pleasure?"

"In truth I know not: you ask me a question which I cannot resolve myself. I was on the point of mentioning him a thousand times; his name was constantly on my lips; but when I would have pronounced it, I wanted courage to execute my design. However, if I did not speak of him, it was not that I thought of him the less."

"That I believe. But shall I tell you why you wanted courage? It was because, accustomed to confide in me your most serious thoughts, you knew not how to conceal, yet feared to acknowledge, that your heart nourished a sentiment which you were conscious I should disapprove. Come hither to me, my child."

Antonia quitted her embroidery frame, threw herself upon her knees by the sofa, and hid her face in her mother's lap.

"Fear not, my sweet girl! Consider me equally as your friend and parent, and apprehend no reproof from me. I have read the emotions of your bosom; you are yet ill skilled in concealing them, and they could not escape my attentive

eye. This Lorenzo is dangerous to your repose; he has already made an impression upon your heart. 'Tis true that I perceive easily that your affection is returned: but what can be the consequences of this attachment? You are poor and friendless, my Antonia; Lorenzo is the heir of the Duke of Medina Celi. Even should himself mean honourably, his uncle never will consent to your union; nor, without that uncle's consent, will I. By sad experience I know what sorrow she must endure, who marries into a family unwilling to receive her. Then struggle with your affection: whatever pains it may cost you, strive to conquer it. Your heart is tender and susceptible: it has already received a strong impression; but when once convinced that you should no encourage such sentiments, I trust that you have sufficient fortitude to drive them from your bosom."

Antonia kissed her hand, and promised implicit obedience. Elvira then continued—

"To prevent your passion from growing stronger, it will be needful to prohibit Lorenzo's visits. The service which he has rendered me permits not my forbidding them positively: but unless I judge too favourably of his character, he will discontinue them without taking offence, if I confess to him my reasons, and throw myself entirely on his generosity. The next time that I see him, I will honestly avow to him the embarrassment which his presence occasions. How say you, my child? Is not this measure necessary?"

Antonia subscribed to everything without hesitation, though not without regret. Her

mother kissed her affectionately, and retired to bed. Antonia followed her example, and vowed so frequently never more to think of Lorenzo, that till sleep closed her eyes she thought of nothing else.[1]

While this was passing at Elvira's, Lorenzo hastened to rejoin the marquis. Everything was ready for the second elopement of Agnes; and at twelve the two friends with a coach and four were at the garden-wall of the convent. Don Raymond drew out his key, and unlocked the door. They entered, and waited for some time in expectation of being joined by Agnes. At length the marquis grew impatient: beginning to fear that his second attempt would succeed no better than the first, he proposed to reconnoitre the convent. The friends advanced towards it. Everything was still and dark. The prioress was anxious to keep the story a secret, fearing lest the crime of one of its members should bring disgrace upon the whole community, or that the interposition of powerful relations should deprive her vengeance of its intended victim. She took care therefore to give the lover of Agnes no cause to suppose that his design was discovered, and his mistress on the point of suffering the punishment

[1] Pour chasser de sa souvenance
L'objet qui plait,
On se donne bien de souffrance
Pour peu d'effet.
Le souvenir durant la vie
Toujours revient;
En pensant qu'il faut qu'on l'oublie
On s'en souvient.
(Footnote in 2nd Edition.)

of her fault. The same reason made her reject the idea of arresting the unknown seducer in the garden: such a proceeding would have created much disturbance, and the disgrace of her convent would have been noised about Madrid. She contented herself with confining Agnes closely: as to the lover, she left him at liberty to pursue his designs. What she had expected was the result. The marquis and Lorenzo waited in vain till the break of day; they then retired without noise, alarmed at the failure of their plan, and ignorant of the cause of its ill success.

The next morning Lorenzo went to the convent, and requested to see his sister. The prioress appeared at the grate with a melancholy countenance. She informed him that for several days Agnes had appeared much agitated; that she had been pressed by the nuns in vain to reveal the cause, and apply to their tenderness for advice and consolation; that she had obstinately persisted in concealing the cause of her distress, but that on Thursday evening it had produced so violent an effect upon her constitution, that she had fallen ill, and was actually confined to her bed. Lorenzo did not credit a syllable of this account: he insisted upon seeing his sister; if she was unable to come to the grate, he desired to be admitted to her cell. The prioress crossed herself! she was shocked at the very idea of a man's profane eye pervading the interior of her holy mansion, and professed herself astonished that Lorenzo could think of such a thing. She told him that his request could not be granted; but that, if he returned the next day, she hoped

that her beloved daughter would then be sufficiently recovered to join him at the parlour grate. With this answer Lorenzo was obliged to retire, unsatisfied and trembling for his sister's safety.

He returned the next morning at an early hour. "Agnes was worse; the physician had pronounced her to be in imminent danger; she was ordered to remain quiet, and it was utterly impossible for her to receive her brother's visit." Lorenzo stormed at this answer, but there was no resource. He raved, he entreated, he threatened; no means were left untried to obtain a sight of Agnes. His endeavours were as fruitless as those of the day before, and he returned in despair to the marquis. On his side, the latter had spared no pains to discover what had occasioned his plot to fail. Don Christoval, to whom the affair was now entrusted, endeavoured to worm out the secret from the old porteress of St. Clare, with whom he had formed an acquaintance; but she was too much upon her guard, and he gained from her no intelligence. The marquis was almost distracted, and Lorenzo felt scarcely less inquietude. Both were convinced that the purposed elopement must have been discovered: they doubted not but that the malady of Agnes was a pretence, but they knew not by what means to rescue her from the hands of the prioress.

Regularly every day did Lorenzo visit the convent; as regularly was he informed that his sister rather grew worse than better. Certain that her indisposition was feigned, these accounts did not alarm him; but his ignorance of her fate, and of the motives which induced the prioress to keep

her from him, excited the most serious uneasiness. He was still uncertain what steps he ought to take, when the marquis received a letter from the cardinal-duke of Lerma. It inclosed the pope's expected bull, ordering that Agnes should be released from her vows, and restored to her relations. This essential paper decided at once the proceedings of her friends; they resolved that Lorenzo should carry it to the domina without delay, and demand that his sister should be instantly given up to him. Against this mandate illness could not be pleaded: it gave her brother the power of removing her instantly to the palace de Medina, and he determined to use that power on the following day.

His mind relieved from inquietude respecting his sister, and his spirits raised by the hope of soon restoring her to freedom, he now had time to give a few moments to love and to Antonia. At the same hour as on his former visit, he repaired to Donna Elvira's. She had given orders for his admission. As soon as he was announced, her daughter retired with Leonella; and when he entered the chamber, he found the lady of the house alone. She received him with less distance than before, and desired him to place himself near her upon the sofa. She then, without losing time, opened her business, as had been agreed between herself and Antonia.

"You must not think me ungrateful, Don Lorenzo, or forgetful how essential are the services which you have rendered me with the marquis. I feel the weight of my obligations: nothing under the sun should induce me taking the step to which I am now compelled, but the interest of

my child, of my beloved Antonia. My health is declining; God only knows how soon I may be summoned before His throne. My daughter will be left without parents, and, should she lose the protection of the Cisternas family, without friends. She is young and artless, uninstructed in the world's perfidy, and with charms sufficient to render her an object of seduction. Judge then how I must tremble at the prospect before her! Judge how anxious I must be to keep her from their society who may excite the yet dormant passions of her bosom. You are amiable, Don Lorenzo; Antonia has a susceptible, a loving heart, and is grateful for the favours conferred upon us by your interference with the marquis. Your presence makes me tremble: I fear lest it should inspire her with sentiments which may embitter the remainder of her life, or encourage her to cherish hopes in her situation unjustifiable and futile. Pardon me, when I avow my terrors, and let my frankness plead my excuse. I cannot forbid you my house, for gratitude restrains me; I can only throw myself upon your generosity, and entreat you to spare the feelings of an anxious, of a doting mother. Believe me when I assure you, that I lament the necessity of rejecting your acquaintance; but there is no remedy, and Antonia's interest obliges me to beg you to forbear your visits. By complying with my request, you will increase the esteem which I already feel for you, and of which everything convinces me that you are truly deserving."

"Your frankness charms me," replied Lorenzo: "You shall find, that in your favourable opinion

of me you were not deceived; yet I hope that the reasons now in my power to allege, will persuade you to withdraw a request which I cannot obey without infinite reluctance. I love your daughter, love her most sincerely; I wish for no greater happiness than to inspire her with the same sentiments, and receive her hand at the altar as her husband. 'Tis true I am not rich myself, my father's death has left me but little in my own possession; but my expectations justify my pretending to the Condé de las Cisternas' daughter."

He was proceeding, but Elvira interrupted him—

"Ah! Don Lorenzo, you forget in that pompous title the meanness of my origin. You forget that I have now passed fourteen years in Spain, disavowed by my husband's family, and existing on a stipend barely sufficient for the support and education of my daughter. Nay, I have even been neglected by most of my own relations, who out of envy affect to doubt the reality of my marriage. My allowance being discontinued at my father-in-law's death, I was reduced to the very brink of want. In this situation I was found by my sister, who, amongst all her foibles, possesses a warm, generous, and affectionate heart. She aided me with the little fortune which my father left her, persuaded me to visit Madrid, and has supported my child and myself since our quitting Murcia. Then, consider not Antonia as descended from the Condé de las Cisternas; consider her as a poor and unprotected orphan, as the grandchild of the tradesman Torribio Dalsa, as the needy pensioner of that tradesman's daughter. Reflect

upon the difference between such a situation and that of the nephew and heir of the potent Duke of Medina. I believe your intentions to be honourable; but as there are no hopes that your uncle will approve of the union, I foresee that the consequences of your attachment must be fatal to my child's repose."

"Pardon me, Segnora; you are misinformed if you suppose the Duke of Medina to resemble the generality of men. His sentiments are liberal and disinterested; he loves me well, and I have no reason to dread his forbidding the marriage, when he perceives that my happiness depends on Antonia. But supposing him to refuse his sanction, what have I still to fear? My parents are no more; my little fortune is in my own possession; it will be sufficient to support Antonia, and I shall exchange for her hand Medina's dukedom without one sigh of regret."

"You are young and eager; it is natural for you to entertain such ideas. But experience has taught me to my cost that curses accompany an unequal alliance. I married the Condé de las Cisternas in opposition to the will of his relations; many an heart-pang has punished me for the imprudent step. Wherever we bent our course, a father's execration pursued Gonzalvo. Poverty overtook us, and no friend was near to relieve our wants. Still our mutual affection existed, but, alas! not without interruption. Accustomed to wealth and ease, ill could my husband support the transition to distress and indigence. He looked back with repining to the comforts which he once enjoyed. He regretted the situation

which for my sake he had quitted; and, in moments when despair possessed his mind, he reproached me with having made him the companion of want and wretchedness. He has called me his bane! the source of his sorrows, the cause of his destruction! Ah! God! he little knew how much keener were my own heart's reproaches! He was ignorant that I suffered trebly, for myself, for my children, and for him! 'Tis true that his anger seldom lasted long: his sincere affection for me soon revived in his heart, and then his repentance for the tears which he had made me shed, tortured me even more than his reproaches. He would throw himself on the ground, implore my forgiveness in the most frantic terms, and load himself with curses for being the murderer of my repose. Taught by experience, that an union contracted against the inclinations of families on either side must be unfortunate, I will save my daughter from those miseries which I have suffered. Without your uncle's consent, while I live, she shall never be yours. Undoubtedly he will disapprove of the union; his power is immense, and Antonia shall not be exposed to his anger and persecution."

"His persecution? How easily may that be avoided! Let the worst happen, it is but quitting Spain. My wealth may easily be realised. The Indian islands will offer us a secure retreat. I have an estate, though not of value, in Hispaniola: thither will we fly, and I shall consider it to be my native country, if it gives me Antonia's undisturbed possession."

"Ah! youth, this is a fond, romantic vision.

Gonzalvo thought the same. He fancied that he could leave Spain without regret; but the moment of parting undeceived him. You know not yet what it is to quit your native land: to quit it never to behold it more! You know not what it is to exchange the scenes where you have passed your infancy, for unknown realms and barbarous climates!—to be forgotten, utterly, eternally forgotten by the companions of your youth!—to see your dearest friends, the fondest objects of your affection, perishing with diseases incidental to Indian atmospheres, and find yourself unable to procure for them necessary assistance! I have felt all this! My husband and two sweet babes found their graves in Cuba; nothing would have saved my young Antonia, but my sudden return to Spain. Ah! Don Lorenzo, could you conceive what I suffered during my absence! Could you know how sorely I regretted all that I left behind, and how dear to me was the very name of Spain! I envied the winds which blew towards it: and when the Spanish sailor chaunted some well-known air as he passed my window, tears filled my eyes, while I thought upon my native land. Gonzalvo too——my husband——"

Elvira paused. Her voice faltered, and she concealed her face with her handkerchief. After a short silence she rose from her sofa, and proceeded—

"Excuse my quitting you for a few moments: the remembrance of what I have suffered has much agitated me, and I need to be alone. Till I return peruse these lines. After my husband's death I found them among his papers. Had I

known sooner that he entertained such sentiments, grief would have killed me. He wrote these verses on his voyage to Cuba, when his mind was clouded by sorrow, and he forgot that he had a wife and children. What we are losing ever seems to us the most precious. Gonzalvo was quitting Spain for ever, and therefore was Spain dearer to his eyes than all else which the world contained. Read them, Don Lorenzo, they will give you some idea of the feelings of a banished man."

Elvira put a paper into Lorenzo's hand, and retired from the chamber. The youth examined the contents, and found them to be as follows:

THE EXILE.

Farewell, oh native Spain! farewell for ever!
These banished eyes shall view thy coasts no more:
A mournful presage tells my heart, that never
Gonzalvo's steps again shall press thy shore.

Hushed are the winds; while soft the vessel sailing
With gentle motion ploughs the unruffled main,
I feel my bosom's boasted courage failing,
And curse the waves which bear me far from Spain.

I see it yet! Beneath yon blue clear heaven
Still do the spires, so well-beloved, appear.
From yonder craggy point the gale of even
Still wafts my native accents to mine ear.

Propped on some moss-grown rock, and gaily singing,
There in the sun his nets the fisher dries;
Oft have I heard the plaintive ballad, bringing
Scenes of past joys before my sorrowing eyes.

Ah ! happy swain ! he waits the accustomed hour,
When twilight-gloom obscures the closing sky ;
Then gladly seeks his loved paternal bower,
And shares the feast his native fields supply.

Friendship and Love, his cottage guests, receive him
With honest welcome and with smile sincere :
No threatening woes of present joys bereave him ;
No sigh his bosom owns, his cheek no tear.

Ah ! happy swain ! such bliss to me denying,
Fortune thy lot with envy bid me view ;
Me, who, from home and Spain an exile flying,
Bid all I value, all I love, adieu.

No more mine ear shall list the well-known ditty
Sung by some mountain-girl, who tends her goats,
Some village-swain imploring amorous pity,
Or shepherd chanting wild his rustic notes.

No more my arms a parent's fond embraces,
No more my heart domestic calm must know
Far from these joys, with sighs which memory traces,
To sultry skies and distant climes I go.

Where Indian suns engender new diseases,
Where snakes and tigers breed, I bend my way,
To brave the feverish thirst no art appeases,
The yellow plague, and madding blaze of day.

But not to feel slow pangs consume my liver,
To die by piece-meal in the bloom of age,
My boiling blood drank by insatiate fever,
And brain delirious with the day-star's rage,

Can make me know such grief, as thus to sever,
With many a bitter sigh, dear land ! from thee ;
To find this heart must dote on thee for ever,
And feel that all thy joys are torn from me !

Ah me ! how oft will fancy's spells, in slumber,
Recall my native country to my mind !
How oft regret will bid me sadly number
Each lost delight, and dear friend left behind !

Wild Murcia's vales and loved romantic bowers,
The river on whose banks a child I played,
My castle's ancient halls, its frowning towers,
Each much-regretted wood, and well-known glade ;

Dreams of the land where all my wishes centre,
Thy scenes, which I am doomed no more to know,
Full oft shall memory trace, my soul's tormentor,
And turn each pleasure past to present woe.

But, lo ! the sun beneath the waves retires ;
Night speeds apace her empire to restore !
Clouds from my sight obscure the village spires,
Now seen but faintly, and now seen no more.

Oh ! breathe not, winds ! Still be the water's motion !
Sleep, sleep, my bark, in silence on the main !
So, when to-morrow's light shall gild the ocean,
Once more mine eyes shall see the coast of Spain.

Vain is the wish ! My last petition scorning,
Fresh blows the gale, and high the billows swell :
Far shall we be before the break of morning :
Oh ! then, for ever, native Spain, farewell !

Lorenzo had scarcely time to read these lines, when Elvira returned to him : the giving a free course to her tears had relieved her, and her spirits had regained their usual composure.

" I have nothing more to say, my lord," said she ; " you have heard my apprehensions, and my reasons for begging you not to repeat your

visits. I have thrown myself in full confidence upon your honour. I am certain that you will not prove my opinion of you to have been too favourable."

"But one question more, Segnora, and I leave you. Should the Duke of Medina approve my love, would my addresses be unacceptable to yourself and the fair Antonia?"

"I will be open with you, Don Lorenzo: there being little probability of such an union taking place, I fear that it is desired but too ardently by my daughter. You have made an impression upon her young heart which gives me the most serious alarm: to prevent that impression from growing stronger, I am obliged to decline your acquaintance. For me, you may be sure that I should rejoice at establishing my child so advantageously. Conscious that my constitution, impaired by grief and illness, forbids me to expect a long continuance in this world, I tremble at the thought of leaving her under the protection of a perfect stranger. The Marquis de las Cisternas is totally unknown to me. He will marry: his lady may look upon Antonia with an eye of displeasure, and deprive her of her only friend. Should the duke, your uncle, give his consent, you need not doubt obtaining mine and my daughter's; but, without his, hope not for ours. At all events, whatever steps you may take, whatever may be the duke's decision, till you know it, let me beg of your forbearing to strengthen by your presence, Antonia's prepossession. If the sanction of your relations authorises your addressing her as your wife, my doors fly open to you. If that sanc-

tion is refused, be satisfied to possess my esteem and gratitude, but remember we must meet no more."

Lorenzo promised reluctantly to conform to this decree: but, he added, that he hoped soon to obtain that consent, which would give him a claim to the renewal of their acquaintance. He then explained to her why the marquis had not called in person; and made no scruple of confiding to her his sister's history. He concluded by saying, "that he hoped to set Agnes at liberty the next day; and that, as soon as Don Raymond's fears were quieted upon this subject, he would lose no time in assuring Donna Elvira of his friendship and protection."

"I tremble for your sister," said she; "I have heard many traits of the domina of St. Clare's character from a friend who was educated in the same convent with her: she reported her to be haughty, inflexible, superstitious, and revengeful. I have since heard, that she is infatuated with the idea of rendering her convent the most regular in Madrid, and never forgave those whose imprudence threw upon it the slightest stain. Though naturally violent and severe, when her interests require it, she well knows how to assume an appearance of benignity. She leaves no means untried to persuade young women of rank to become members of her community: she is implacable when once incensed, and has too much intrepidity to shrink at taking the most rigorous measures for punishing the offender. Doubtless she will consider your sister's quitting the convent as a disgrace thrown upon it: she will use every

artifice to avoid obeying his holiness: and I shudder to think that Donna Agnes is in the hands of this dangerous woman."

Lorenzo now rose to take leave. Elvira gave him her hand at parting, which he kissed respectfully; and, telling her that he soon hoped for the permission to salute that of Antonia, he returned to his hotel. The lady was perfectly satisfied with the conversation which had passed between them: she looked forward with satisfaction to the prospect of his becoming her son-in-law; but prudence bade her conceal from her daughter's knowledge the flattering hopes which herself now ventured to entertain.

Scarcely was it day, and already Lorenzo was at the convent of St. Clare, furnished with the necessary mandate. The nuns were at matins. He waited impatiently for the conclusion of the service; and at length the prioress appeared at the parlour-grate. Agnes was demanded. The old lady replied with a melancholy air, that the dear child's situation grew hourly more dangerous: that the physicians despaired of her life; but that they had declared the only chance of her recovery to consist in keeping her quiet, and not to permit those to approach her whose presence was likely to agitate her. Not a word of all this was believed by Lorenzo, any more than he credited the expressions of grief and affection for Agnes with which this account was interlarded. To end the business he put the pope's bull into the hands of the domina, and insisted that, ill or in health, his sister should be delivered to him without delay.

The prioress received the paper with an air of

humility; but no sooner had her eye glanced over the contents than her resentment baffled all the efforts of hypocrisy. A deep crimson spread itself over her face, and she darted upon Lorenzo looks of rage and menace.

"This order is positive," said she, in a voice of anger, which she in vain strove to disguise: "willingly would I obey it, but, unfortunately, it is out of my power."

Lorenzo interrupted her by an exclamation of surprise.

"I repeat it, Segnor, to obey this order is totally out of my power. From tenderness to a brother's feelings, I would have communicated the sad event to you by degrees, and have prepared you to hear it with fortitude. My measures are broken through: this order commands me to deliver up to you the sister Agnes without delay; I am, therefore, obliged to inform you, without circumlocution, that on Friday last she expired."

Lorenzo started back with horror, and turned pale. A moment's recollection convinced him that this assertion must be false, and it restored him to himself.

"You deceive me!" said he, passionately: "but five minutes past you assured me that, though ill, she was still alive. Produce her this instant! See her I must and will; and every attempt to keep her from me will be unavailing."

"You forget yourself, Segnor: you owe respect to my age as well as my profession. Your sister is no more. If I at first concealed her death, it was from dreading lest an event so unexpected

should produce on you too violent an effect. In truth, I am but ill repaid for my attention. And what interest, I pray you, should I have in detaining her? To know her wish of quitting our society is a sufficient reason for me to wish her absence, and think her a disgrace to the sisterhood of St. Clare: but she has forfeited my affection in a manner yet more culpable. Her crimes were great; and when you know the cause of her death, you will doubtless rejoice, Don Lorenzo, that such a wretch is no longer in existence. She was taken ill on Thursday last on returning from confession in the Capuchin chapel: her malady seemed attended with strange circumstances; but she persisted in concealing its cause. Thanks to the Virgin, we were too ignorant to suspect it! Judge then what must have been our consternation, our horror, when she was delivered the next day of a still-born child, whom she immediately followed to the grave. How, Segnor? Is it possible that your countenance expresses no surprise, no indignation? Is it possible that your sister's infamy was known to you, and that still she possessed your affection? In that case you have no need of my compassion. I can say nothing more, except repeat my inability of obeying the orders of his holiness. Agnes is no more; and, to convince you that what I say is true, I swear by our blessed Saviour, that three days have passed since she was buried."

Here she kissed a small crucifix which hung at her girdle: she then rose from her chair, and quitted the parlour. As she withdrew she cast upon Lorenzo a scornful smile.

"Farewell, Segnor," said she; "I know no remedy for this accident. I fear that even a second bull from the pope will not procure your sister's resurrection."

Lorenzo also retired, penetrated with affliction: but Don Raymond's, at the news of this event, amounted to madness: he would not be convinced that Agnes was really dead; and continued to insist that the walls of St. Clare still confined her. No arguments could make him abandon his hopes of regaining her. Every day some fresh scheme was invented for procuring intelligence of her, and all of them were attended with the same success.

On his part, Medina gave up the idea of seeing his sister more; yet he believed that she had been taken off by unfair means. Under this persuasion, he encouraged Don Raymond's researches, determined, should he discover the least warrant for his suspicions, to take a severe vengeance upon the unfeeling prioress. The loss of his sister affected him sincerely: nor was it the least cause of his distress, that propriety obliged him for some time to defer mentioning Antonia to the duke. In the meanwhile, his emissaries constantly surrounded Elvira's door. He had intelligence of all the movements of his mistress. As she never failed every Thursday to attend the sermon in the Capuchin cathedral, he was secure of seeing her once a week; though, in compliance with his promise, he carefully shunned her observation. Thus two long months passed away. Still no information was procured of Agnes. All but the marquis credited her death: and now

Lorenzo determined to disclose his sentiments to his uncle: he had already dropped some hints of his intention to marry: they had been as favourably received as he could expect; and he harboured no doubt of the success of his application.

CHAPTER VI

While in each other's arms entranced they lay,
They blessed the night, and cursed the coming day.
LEE.

THE burst of transport was passed: Ambrosio's lust was satisfied. Pleasure fled, and Shame usurped her seat in his bosom. Confused and terrified at his weakness, he drew himself from Matilda's arms: his perjury presented itself before him: he reflected on the scene which had been acted, and trembled at the consequences of a discovery: he looked forward with horror: his heart was despondent, and became the abode of satiety and disgust: he avoided the eyes of his partner in frailty. A melancholy silence prevailed, during which both seemed busied with disagreeable reflections.

Matilda was the first to break it. She took his hand gently, and pressed it to her burning lips.

"Ambrosio!" she murmured, in a soft and trembling voice.

The abbot started at the sound: he turned his eyes upon Matilda's; they were filled with tears; her cheeks were covered with blushes, and her supplicating looks seemed to solicit his compassion.

"Dangerous woman!" said he; "into what an abyss of misery have you plunged me! Should your sex be discovered, my honour, nay, my life, must pay for the pleasure of a few moments.

Fool that I was, to trust myself to your seductions! What can now be done? How can my offence be expiated? What atonement can purchase the pardon of my crime? Wretched Matilda, you have destroyed my quiet for ever!"

"To me these reproaches, Ambrosio? to me, who have sacrificed for you the world's pleasures, the luxury of wealth, the delicacy of sex, my friends, my fortune, and my fame? What have you lost which I preserved? Have *I* not shared in *your* guilt? Have *you* not shared in *my* pleasure? Guilt did I say? In what consists ours, unless in the opinion of an ill-judging world? Let that world be ignorant of them, and our joys become divine and blameless! Unnatural were your vows of celibacy; man was not created for such a state: and were love a crime, God would never have made it so sweet, so irresistible! Then banish those clouds from your brow, my Ambrosio. Indulge in those pleasures freely, without which life is a worthless gift. Cease to reproach me with having taught you what is bliss, and feel equal transports with the woman who adores you!"

As she spoke, her eyes filled with a delicious languor: her bosom panted: she twined her arms voluptuously round him, drew him towards her, and glued her lips to his. Ambrosio again raged with desire: the die was thrown: his vows were already broken: he had already committed the crime, and why should he refrain from enjoying its reward? He clasped her to his breast with redoubled ardour. No longer repressed by the sense of shame, he gave a loose to his intemperate appetites; while the fair wanton put every in-

vention of lust in practice, every refinement in the art of pleasure, which might heighten the bliss of her possession, and render her lover's transports still more exquisite. Ambrosio rioted in delights till then unknown to him. Swift fled the night, and the morning blushed to behold him still clasped in the embraces of Matilda.

Intoxicated with pleasure, the monk rose from the syren's luxurious couch: he no longer reflected with shame upon his incontinence, or dreaded the vengeance of offended heaven: his only fear was lest death should rob him of enjoyments, for which his long fast had only given a keener edge to his appetite. Matilda was still under the influence of poison; and the voluptuous monk trembled less for his preserver's life than his concubine's. Deprived of her, he would not easily find another mistress with whom he could indulge his passions so fully, and so safely; he therefore pressed her with earnestness to use the means of preservation which she had declared to be in her possession.

"Yes!" replied Matilda; "since you have made me feel that life is valuable, I will rescue mine at any rate. No dangers shall appal me: I will look upon the consequences of my action boldly, nor shudder at the horrors which they present: I will think my sacrifice scarcely worthy to purchase your possession; and remember, that a moment passed in your arms in this world o'erpays an age of punishment in the next. But before I take this step, Ambrosio, give me your solemn oath never to enquire by what means I shall preserve myself."

He did so, in a manner most binding.

"I thank you, my beloved. This precaution is necessary; for, though you know it not, you are under the command of vulgar prejudices. The business on which I must be employed this night might startle you, from its singularity, and lower me in your opinion. Tell me, do you possess the key of the low door on the western side of the garden?"

"The door which opens into the burying-ground common to us and the sisterhood of St. Clare? I have not the key, but can easily procure it."

"You have only this to do. Admit me into the burying-ground at midnight. Watch while I descend into the vaults of St. Clare, lest some prying eye should observe my actions. Leave me there alone for an hour, and that life is safe which I dedicate to your pleasures. To prevent creating suspicion, do not visit me during the day. Remember the key, and that I expect you before twelve. Hark! I hear steps approaching! Leave me, I will pretend to sleep."

The friar obeyed, and left the cell. As he opened the door, father Pablos made his appearance.

"I come," said the latter, "to enquire after the health of my young patient."

"Hush!" replied Ambrosio, laying his finger upon his lip; "speak softly; I am just come from him; he has fallen into a profound slumber, which doubtless will be of service to him. Do not disturb him at present, for he wishes to repose."

Father Pablos obeyed, and, hearing the bell

ring, accompanied the abbot to matins. Ambrosio felt embarrassed as he entered the chapel. Guilt was new to him, and he fancied that every eye could read the transactions of the night upon his countenance. He strove to pray: his bosom no longer glowed with devotion: his thoughts insensibly wandered to Matilda's secret charms. But what he wanted in purity of heart, he supplied by exterior sanctity. The better to cloak his transgression he redoubled his pretensions to the semblance of virtue, and never appeared more devoted to heaven than since he had broken through his engagements. Thus did he unconsciously add hypocrisy to perjury and incontinence: he had fallen into the latter errors from yielding to seduction almost irresistible: but he was now guilty of a voluntary fault, by endeavouring to conceal those into which another had betrayed him.

The matins concluded, Ambrosio retired to his cell. The pleasures which he had just tasted for the first time were still impressed upon his mind: his brain was bewildered, and presented a confused chaos of remorse, voluptuousness, inquietude, and fear: he looked back with regret to that peace of soul, that security of virtue, which till then had been his portion: he had indulged in excesses whose very idea, but four-and-twenty hours before, he had recoiled at with horror: he shuddered at reflecting that a trifling indiscretion on his part, or on Matilda's, would overturn that fabric of reputation which it had cost him thirty years to erect, and render him the abhorrence of that people of whom he was then the idol. Conscience

painted to him in glaring colours his perjury and weakness; apprehension magnified to him the horrors of punishment, and he already fancied himself in the prisons of the Inquisition. To these tormenting ideas succeeded Matilda's beauty, and those delicious lessons, which once learnt can never be forgotten. A single glance thrown upon these reconciled him with himself: he considered the pleasures of the former night to have been purchased at an easy price by the sacrifice of innocence and honour. Their very remembrance filled his soul with ecstasy: he cursed his foolish vanity, which had induced him to waste in obscurity the bloom of life, ignorant of the blessings of love and woman: he determined, at all events, to continue his commerce with Matilda, and called every argument to his aid which might confirm his resolution: he asked himself, provided his irregularity was unknown, in what would his fault consist, and what consequences he had to apprehend? By adhering strictly to every rule of his order save chastity, he doubted not to retain the esteem of men, and even the protection of heaven; he trusted easily to be forgiven so slight and natural a deviation from his vows; but he forgot that, having pronounced those vows, incontinence, in laymen the most venial of errors, became in his person the most heinous of crimes.

Once decided upon his future conduct, his mind became more easy: he threw himself upon his bed, and strove by sleeping to recruit his strength exhausted by his nocturnal excesses. He awoke refreshed, and eager for a repetition of his pleasures. Obedient to Matilda's order, he visited

not her cell during the day. Father Pablos mentioned in the refectory that Rosario had at length been prevailed upon to follow his prescription; but that the medicine had not produced the slightest effect, and that he believed no mortal skill could rescue him from the grave. With this opinion the abbot agreed, and affected to lament the untimely fate of a youth whose talents had appeared so promising.

The night arrived. Ambrosio had taken care to procure from the porter the key of the low door opening into the cemetery. Furnished with this, when all was silent in the monastery, he quitted his cell, and hastened to Matilda's. She had left her bed and was ready dressed before his arrival.

"I have been expecting you with impatience," said she; "my life depends upon these moments. Have you the key?"

"I have."

"Away then to the garden. We have no time to lose. Follow me!"

She took a small covered basket from the table. Bearing this in one hand, and the lamp, which was flaming upon the hearth, in the other, she hastened from the cell. Ambrosio followed her. Both maintained a profound silence. She moved on with quick but cautious steps, passed through the cloisters, and reached the western side of the garden: her eyes flashed with a fire and wildness which impressed the monk at once with awe and horror. A determined, desperate courage reigned upon her brow: she gave the lamp to Ambrosio; then taking from him the key, she unlocked the low door, and entered the cemetery. It was a

vast and spacious square, planted with yew trees ; half of it belonged to the abbey, the other half was the property of the sisterhood of St. Clare, and was protected by a roof of stone : the division was marked by an iron railing, the wicket of which was generally left unlocked.

Thither Matilda bent her course ; she opened the wicket, and sought for the door leading to the subterraneous vaults where reposed the mouldering bodies of the votaries of St. Clare. The night was perfectly dark ; neither moon nor stars were visible. Luckily there was not a breath of wind, and the friar bore his lamp in full security : by the assistance of its beams, the door of the sepulchre was soon discovered. It was sunk within the hollow of a wall, and almost concealed by thick festoons of ivy hanging over it. Three steps of rough-hewn stone conducted to it, and Matilda was on the point of descending them, when she suddenly darted back.

" There are people in the vaults ! " she whispered to the monk ; " conceal yourself till they are passed."

She took refuge behind a lofty and magnificent tomb, erected in honour of the convent's foundress. Ambrosio followed her example, carefully hiding his lamp, lest its beams should betray them. But a few moments had elapsed when the door was pushed open leading to the subterraneous caverns. Rays of light proceeded up the staircase : they enabled the concealed spectators to observe two females dressed in religious habits, who seemed engaged in earnest conversation. The abbot had no difficulty to recognise the prioress of St. Clare

in the first, and one of the elder nuns in her companion.

"Everything is prepared," said the prioress: "her fate shall be decided to-morrow; all her tears and sighs will be unavailing. No! In five-and-twenty years that I have been superior of this convent, never did I witness a transaction more infamous!"

"You must expect much opposition to your will," the other replied in a milder voice: "Agnes has many friends in the convent, and in particular the mother St. Ursula will espouse her cause most warmly. In truth, she merits to have friends; and I wish I could prevail upon you to consider her youth, and her peculiar situation. She seems sensible of her fault; the excess of her grief proves her penitence, and I am convinced that her tears flow more from contrition than fear of punishment. Reverend mother, would you be persuaded to mitigate the severity of your sentence; would you but deign to overlook this first transgression; I offer myself as the pledge of her future conduct."

"Overlook it, say you? Mother Camilla, you amaze me! What? after disgracing me in the presence of Madrid's idol, of the very man on whom I most wished to impress an idea of the strictness of my discipline? How despicable must I have appeared to the reverend abbot! No, mother, no! I never can forgive the insult. I cannot better convince Ambrosio that I abhor such crimes, than by punishing that of Agnes with all the rigour of which our severe laws admit. Cease then your supplications, they will all be unavailing. My resolution is taken. To-morrow

Agnes shall be made a terrible example of my justice and resentment."

The mother Camilla seemed not to give up the point, but by this time the nuns were out of hearing. The prioress unlocked the door which communicated with St. Clare's Chapel, and, having entered with her companion, closed it again after them.

Matilda now asked, who was this Agnes with whom the prioress was thus incensed, and what connection she could have with Ambrosio. He related her adventure; and he added, that since that time his ideas having undergone a thorough revolution, he now felt much compassion for the unfortunate nun.

"I design," said he, "to request an audience of the domina to-morrow, and use every means to obtain a mitigation of her sentence."

"Beware of what you do," interrupted Matilda; "your sudden change of sentiment may naturally create surprise, and may give birth to suspicions which it is most our interest to avoid. Rather redouble your outward austerity, and thunder out menaces against the errors of others, the better to conceal your own. Abandon the nun to her fate. Your interfering might be dangerous, and her imprudence merits to be punished: she is unworthy to enjoy love's pleasures, who has not wit enough to conceal them. But in discussing this trivial subject I waste moments which are precious. The night flies apace, and much must be done before morning. The nuns are retired, all is safe. Give me the lamp, Ambrosio, I must descend alone into these caverns: wait here, and

if any one approaches warn me by your voice; but as you value your existence, presume not to follow me: your life would fall a victim to your imprudent curiosity."

Thus saying, she advanced towards the sepulchre, still holding her lamp in one hand, and her little basket in the other. She touched the door: it turned slowly upon its grating hinges, and a narrow winding staircase of black marble presented itself to her eyes. She descended it; Ambrosio remained above, watching the faint beams of the lamp as they still receded down the stairs. They disappeared, and he found himself in total darkness.

Left to himself, he could not reflect without surprise on the sudden change in Matilda's character and sentiments. But a few days had passed since she appeared the mildest and softest of her sex, devoted to his will, and looking up to him as a superior being. Now she assumed a sort of courage and manliness in her manners and discourse, but ill calculated to please him. She spoke no longer to insinuate, but command: he found himself unable to cope with her argument, and was unwillingly obliged to confess the superiority of her judgment. Every moment convinced him of the astonishing powers of her mind; but what she gained in the opinion of the man, she lost with interest in the affection of the lover. He regretted Rosario, the fond, the gentle, the submissive; he grieved that Matilda preferred the virtues of his sex to those of her own; and when he thought of her expressions respecting the devoted nun, he could not help blaming them as cruel and unfeminine. Pity

is a sentiment so natural, so appropriate to the female character, that it is scarcely a merit for a woman to possess it, but to be without it is a grievous crime. Ambrosio could not easily forgive his mistress for being deficient in this amiable quality. However, though he blamed her insensibility, he felt the truth of her observations; and though he pitied sincerely the unfortunate Agnes, he resolved to drop the idea of interposing in her behalf.

Near an hour had elapsed since Matilda descended into the caverns; still she returned not. Ambrosio's curiosity was excited. He drew near the staircase—he listened—all was silent, except at intervals he caught the sound of Matilda's voice, as it wound along the subterraneous passages, and was re-echoed by the sepulchre's vaulted roofs. She was at too great a distance for him to distinguish her words, and ere they reached him, they were deadened in a low murmur. He longed to penetrate into this mystery. He resolved to disobey her injunctions, and follow her into the cavern. He advanced to the staircase; he had already descended some steps, when his courage failed him. He remembered Matilda's menaces if he infringed her orders, and his bosom was filled with a secret, unaccountable awe. He returned up the stairs, resumed his former station, and waited impatiently for the conclusion of this adventure.

Suddenly he was sensible of a violent shock. An earthquake rocked the ground, the columns which supported the roof under which he stood were so strongly shaken, that every moment men-

aced him with its fall, and at the same moment he heard a loud and tremendous burst of thunder; it ceased, and his eyes being fixed upon the staircase, he saw a bright column of light flash along the caverns beneath. It was seen but for an instant. No sooner did it disappear, than all was once more quiet and obscure. Profound darkness again surrounded him, and the silence of night was only broken by the whirring bat as she flitted slowly by him.

With every instant Ambrosio's amazement increased. Another hour elapsed, after which the same light again appeared, and was lost again as suddenly. It was accompanied by a strain of sweet but solemn music, which, as it stole through the vaults below, inspired the monk with mingled delight and terror. It had not long been hushed, when he heard Matilda's steps upon the staircase. She ascended from the cavern; the most lively joy animated her beautiful features.

"Did you see anything?" she asked.

"Twice I saw a column of light flash up the staircase."

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing."

"The morning is on the point of breaking: let us retire to the abbey, lest daylight should betray us."

With a light step she hastened from the burying-ground. She regained her cell, and the curious abbot still accompanied her. She closed the door, and disembarrassed herself of her lamp and basket.

"I have succeeded!" she cried, throwing

herself upon his bosom; "succeeded beyond my fondest hopes! I shall live, Ambrosio, shall live for you! The step which I shuddered at taking proves to me a source of joys inexpressible! Oh! that I dared communicate those joys to you! Oh! that I were permitted to share with you my power, and raise you as high above the level of your sex, as one bold deed has exalted me above mine!"

"And what prevents you, Matilda?" interrupted the friar. "Why is your business in the cavern made a secret? Do you think me undeserving of your confidence? Matilda, I must doubt the truth of your affection, while you have joys in which I am forbidden to share."

"You reproach me with injustice; I grieve sincerely that I am obliged to conceal from you my happiness; but I am not to blame; the fault lies not in me but in yourself, my Ambrosio. You are still too much the monk, your mind is enslaved by the prejudices of education; and superstition might make you shudder at the idea of that which experience has taught me to prize and value. At present you are unfit to be trusted with a secret of such importance; but the strength of your judgment, and the curiosity which I rejoice to see sparkling in your eyes, make me hope that you will one day deserve my confidence. Till that period arrives, restrain your impatience. Remember that you have given me your solemn oath never to enquire into this night's adventures. I insist upon your keeping this oath; for, though," she added, smiling, while she sealed his lips with a wanton kiss, "though I forgive your breaking

your vows to heaven, I expect you to keep your vows to me."

The friar returned the embrace, which had set his blood on fire. The luxurious and unbounded excesses of the former night were renewed, and they separated not till the bell rang for matins.

The same pleasures were frequently repeated. The monks rejoiced in the feigned Rosario's unexpected recovery, and none of them suspected his real sex. The abbot possessed his mistress in tranquillity, and, perceiving his frailty unsuspected, abandoned himself to his passions in full security. Shame and remorse no longer tormented him. Frequent repetitions made him familiar with sin, and his bosom became proof against the stings of conscience. In these sentiments he was encouraged by Matilda; but she soon was aware that she had satiated her lover by the unbounded freedom of her caresses. Her charms becoming accustomed to him, they ceased to excite the same desires which at first they had inspired. The delirium of passion being past, he had leisure to observe every trifling defect; where none were to be found, satiety made him fancy them. The monk was glutted with the fulness of pleasure. A week had scarcely elapsed before he wearied of his paramour: his warm constitution still made him seek in her arms the gratification of his lust. But when the moment of passion was over, he quitted her with disgust, and his humour, naturally inconstant, made him sigh impatiently for variety.

Possession, which cloys man, only increases the affection of women. Matilda with every succeed-

ing day grew more attached to the friar. Since he had obtained her favours, he was become dearer to her than ever, and she felt grateful to him for the pleasures in which they had equally been sharers. Unfortunately, as her passion grew ardent, Ambrosio's grew cold; the very marks of her fondness excited his disgust, and its excess served to extinguish the flame which already burned but feebly in his bosom. Matilda could not but remark that her society seemed to him daily less agreeable; he was inattentive while she spoke; her musical talents, which she possessed in perfection, had lost the power of amusing him; or, if he deigned to praise them, his compliments were evidently forced and cold. He no longer gazed upon her with affection, or applauded her sentiments with a lover's partiality. This Matilda well perceived, and redoubled her efforts to revive those sentiments which he had once felt. She could not but fail, since he considered as importunities the pains which she took to please him, and was disgusted by the very means which she used to recall the wanderer. Still, however, their illicit commerce continued; but it was clear that he was led to her arms, not by love, but the cravings of brutal appetite. His constitution made a woman necessary to him, and Matilda was the only one with whom he could indulge his passions safely. In spite of her beauty, he gazed upon every other female with more desire; but fearing that his hypocrisy should be made public, he confined his inclinations to his own breast.

It was by no means his nature to be timid:

but his education had impressed his mind with fear so strongly, that apprehension was become part of his character. Had his youth been passed in the world, he would have shown himself possessed of many brilliant and manly qualities. He was naturally enterprising, firm, and fearless: he had a warrior's heart, and he might have shone with splendour at the head of an army. There was no want of generosity in his nature: the wretched never failed to find him a compassionate auditor: his abilities were quick and shining, and his judgment vast, solid and decisive. With such qualifications he would have been an ornament to his country: that he possessed them he had given proofs in his earliest infancy, and his parents had beheld his dawning virtues with the fondest delight and admiration. Unfortunately, while yet a child, he was deprived of those parents. He fell into the power of a relation, whose only wish about him was never to hear of him more: for that purpose he gave him in charge to his friend, the former superior of the Capuchins. The abbot, a very monk, used all his endeavours to persuade the boy that happiness existed not without the walls of a convent. He succeeded fully. To deserve admittance into the order of St. Francis was Ambrosio's highest ambition. His instructors carefully repressed those virtues whose grandeur and disinterestedness were ill suited to the cloister. Instead of universal benevolence, he adopted a selfish partiality for his own particular establishment; he was taught to consider compassion for the errors of others as a crime of the blackest dye: the noble frankness

of his temper was exchanged for servile humility ; and in order to break his natural spirit, the monks terrified his young mind, by placing before him all the horrors with which superstition could furnish them : they painted to him the torments of the damned in colours the most dark, terrible and fantastic, and threatened him at the slightest fault with eternal perdition. No wonder that his imagination constantly dwelling upon these fearful objects should have rendered his character timid and apprehensive. Add to this, that his long absence from the great world, and total unacquaintance with the common dangers of life, made him form of them an idea far more dismal than the reality. While the monks were busied in rooting out his virtues, and narrowing his sentiments, they allowed every vice which had fallen to his share to arrive at full perfection. He was suffered to be proud, vain, ambitious, and disdainful : he was jealous of his equals, and despised all merit but his own : he was implacable when offended, and cruel in his revenge. Still, in spite of the pains taken to pervert them, his natural good qualities would occasionally break through the gloom cast over them so carefully. At such times the contest for superiority between his real and acquired character was striking and unaccountable to those unacquainted with his original disposition. He pronounced the most severe sentences upon offenders, which the moment after compassion induced him to mitigate ; he undertook the most daring enterprises, which the fear of their consequences soon obliged him to abandon ; his inborn genius darted a brilliant

light upon subjects the most obscure ; and almost instantaneously his superstition replunged them in darkness more profound than that from which they had just been rescued. His brother monks, regarding him as a superior being, remarked not this contradiction in their idol's conduct. They were persuaded that what he did must be right, and supposed him to have good reasons for changing his resolutions. The fact was, that the different sentiments with which education and nature had inspired him, were combating in his bosom ; it remained for his passions, which as yet no opportunity had called into play, to decide the victory. Unfortunately his passions were the worst judges to whom he could possibly have applied. His monastic seclusion had till now been in his favour, since it gave him no room for discovering his bad qualities. The superiority of his talents raised him too far above his companions to permit his being jealous of them : his exemplary piety, persuasive eloquence, and pleasing manners had secured him universal esteem, and consequently he had no injuries to revenge ; his ambition was justified by his acknowledged merit, and his pride considered as no more than proper confidence. He never saw, much less conversed with the other sex ; he was ignorant of the pleasures in woman's power to bestow ; and if he read in the course of his studies

"That men were fond, he smiled, and wondered how."

For a time spare diet, frequent watching, and severe penance cooled and repressed the natural warmth of his constitution : but no sooner did

opportunity present itself, no sooner did he catch a glimpse of joys to which he was still a stranger, than religion's barriers were too feeble to resist the overwhelming torrent of his desires. All impediments yielded before the force of his temperament, warm, sanguine, and voluptuous in the excess. As yet his other passions lay dormant; but they only needed to be once awakened to display themselves with violence as great and irresistible.

He continued to be the admiration of Madrid. The enthusiasm created by his eloquence seemed rather to increase than diminish. Every Thursday, which was the only day when he appeared in public, the Capuchin cathedral was crowded with auditors, and his discourse was always received with the same approbation. He was named confessor to all the chief families in Madrid; and no one was counted fashionable who was enjoined penance by any other than Ambrosio. In his resolution of never stirring out of his convent he still persisted. This circumstance created a still greater opinion of his sanctity and self-denial. Above all, the women sang forth his praises loudly, less influenced by devotion than by his noble countenance, majestic air, and well-turned graceful figure. The abbey door was thronged with carriages from morning to night; the noblest and fairest dames of Madrid confessed to the abbot their secret peccadilloes. The eyes of the luxurious friar devoured their charms. Had his penitents consulted these interpreters, he would have needed no other means of expressing his desires. For his misfortune, they were so strongly persuaded

of his continence, that the possibility of his harbouring indecent thoughts never once entered their imaginations. The climate's heat, 'tis well known, operates with no small influence upon the constitutions of the Spanish ladies: but the most abandoned would have thought it an easier task to inspire with passion the marble statue of St. Francis than the cold and rigid heart of the immaculate Ambrosio.

On his part, the friar was little acquainted with the depravity of the world; he suspected not that but few of his penitents would have rejected his addresses. Yet had he been better instructed on this head, the danger attending such an attempt would have sealed up his lips in silence. He knew that it would be difficult for a woman to keep a secret so strange and so important as his frailty; and he even trembled lest Matilda should betray him. Anxious to preserve a reputation which was infinitely dear to him, he saw all the risk of committing it to the power of some vain giddy female; and as the beauties of Madrid affected only his senses without touching his heart, he forgot them as soon as they were out of his sight. The danger of discovery, the fear of being repulsed, the loss of reputation; all these considerations counselled him to stifle his desires; and though he now felt for it the most perfect indifference, he was necessitated to confine himself to Matilda's person.

One morning, the confluence of penitents was greater than usual. He was detained in the confessional chair till a late hour. At length the crowd was despatched, and he prepared to quit

the chapel, when two females entered, and drew near him with humility. They threw up their veils, and the youngest entreated him to listen to her for a few moments. The melody of her voice, of that voice to which no man ever listened without interest, immediately caught Ambrosio's attention. He stopped. The petitioner seemed bowed down with affliction : her cheeks were pale, her eyes dimmed with tears, and her hair fell in disorder over her face and bosom. Still her countenance was so sweet, so innocent, so heavenly, as might have charmed an heart less susceptible than that which panted in the abbot's breast. With more than usual softness of manner he desired her to proceed, and heard her speak as follows, with an emotion which increased every moment :

" Reverend father, you see an unfortunate threatened with the loss of her dearest, of almost her only friend ! My mother, my excellent mother, lies upon the bed of sickness. A sudden and dreadful malady seized her last night, and so rapid has been its progress that the physicians despair of her life. Human aid fails me ; nothing remains for me but to implore the mercy of heaven. Father, all Madrid rings with the report of your piety and virtue. Deign to remember my mother in your prayers : perhaps they may prevail on the Almighty to spare her ; and should that be the case, I engage myself every Thursday in the next three months to illuminate the shrine of St. Francis in his honour."

" So ! " thought the monk ; " here we have a second Vinentio della Ronda. Rosario's adven-

ture began thus;" and he wished secretly that this might have the same conclusion.

He acceded to the request. The petitioner returned him thanks with every mark of gratitude, and then continued:

"I have yet another favour to ask. We are strangers in Madrid: my mother needs a confessor, and knows not to whom she should apply. We understand that you never quit the abbey, and, alas! my poor mother is unable to come hither! If you would have the goodness, reverend father, to name a proper person, whose wise and pious consolations may soften the agonies of my parent's death-bed, you will confer an everlasting favour upon hearts not ungrateful."

With this petition also the monk complied. Indeed, what petition would he have refused, if urged in such enchanting accents? The suppliant was so interesting! Her voice was so sweet, so harmonious! Her very tears became her, and her affliction seemed to add new lustre to her charms. He promised to send to her a confessor that same evening, and begged her to leave her address. The companion presented him with a card on which it was written, and then withdrew with the fair petitioner, who pronounced before her departure a thousand benedictions on the abbot's goodness. His eyes followed her out of the chapel. It was not till she was out of sight that he examined the card, on which he read the following words:

"Donna Elvira Dalsa, strada di San Iago, four doors from the palace d'Albornos."

The suppliant was no other than Antonia, and

Leonella was her companion. The latter had not consented without difficulty to accompany her niece to the abbey: Ambrosio had inspired her with such awe, that she trembled at the very sight of him. Her fears had conquered even her natural loquacity, and while in his presence she uttered not a single syllable.

The monk retired to his cell, whither he was pursued by Antonia's image. He felt a thousand new emotions springing in his bosom, and he trembled to examine into the cause which gave them birth. They were totally different from those inspired by Matilda, when she first declared her sex and her affection. He felt not the provocation of lust; no voluptuous desires rioted in his bosom: nor did a burning imagination picture to him the charms which modesty had veiled from his eyes. On the contrary, what he now felt was a mingled sentiment of tenderness, admiration, and respect. A soft and delicious melancholy infused itself into his soul, and he would not have exchanged it for the most lively transports of joy. Society now disgusted him: he delighted in solitude, which permitted his indulging the visions of fancy: his thoughts were all gentle, sad, and soothing; and the whole wide world presented him with no other object than Antonia.

"Happy man!" he exclaimed in his romantic enthusiasm, "happy man, who is destined to possess the heart of that lovely girl! what delicacy in her features! what elegance in her form! how enchanting was the timid innocence of her eyes! and how different from the wanton expression, the wild luxurious fire, which sparkles in Matilda's!

Oh! sweeter must one kiss be, snatched from the rosy lips of the one, than all the full and lustful favours bestowed so freely by the other. Matilda gluts me with enjoyment even to loathing, forces me to her arms, apes the harlot, and glories in her prostitution. Disgusting! Did she know the inexpressible charm of modesty, how irresistibly it enthrals the heart of man, how firmly it chains him to the throne of beauty, she never would have thrown it off. What would be too dear a price for this lovely girl's affections? What would I refuse to sacrifice, could I be released from my vows, and permitted to declare my love in the sight of earth and heaven? While I strove to inspire her with tenderness, with friendship and esteem, how tranquil and undisturbed would the hours roll away! Gracious God! to see her blue downcast eyes beam upon mine with timid fondness! to sit for days, for years, listening to that gentle voice! to acquire the right of obliging her, and hear the artless expressions of her gratitude! to watch the emotions of that spotless heart! to encourage each dawning virtue! to share in her joy when happy, to kiss away her tears when distressed, and to see her fly to my arms for comfort and support! Yes; if there is perfect bliss on earth, 'tis his lot alone who becomes that angel's husband."

While his fancy coined these ideas, he paced his cell with a disordered air. His eyes were fixed upon vacancy: his head reclined upon his shoulder: a tear rolled down his cheek, while he reflected that the vision of happiness for him could never be realised.

"She is lost to me," he continued; "by marriage she cannot be mine: and to seduce such innocence, to use the confidence reposed in me to work her ruin—Oh! it would be a crime, blacker than yet the world ever witnessed! Fear not, lovely girl! your virtue runs no risk from me. Not for Indies would I make that gentle bosom know the tortures of remorse."

Again he paced his chamber hastily. Then stopping, his eye fell upon the picture of his once-admired Madonna. He tore it with indignation from the wall: he threw it on the ground, and spurned it from him with his foot.

"The prostitute."

Unfortunate Matilda! her paramour forgot that for his sake alone she had forfeited her claim to virtue; and his only reason for despising her was that she had loved him much too well.

He threw himself into a chair, which stood near the table. He saw the card with Elvira's address. He took it up, and it brought to his recollection his promise respecting a confessor. He passed a few minutes in doubt; but Antonia's empire over him was already too much decided to permit his making a long resistance to the idea which struck him. He resolved to be the confessor himself. He could leave the abbey unobserved without difficulty: by wrapping up his head in his cowl he hoped to pass through the streets without being recognised: by taking these precautions and by recommending secrecy to Elvira's family, he doubted not to keep Madrid in ignorance that he had broken his vow never to see the outside of the abbey walls. Matilda was

the only person whose vigilance he dreaded : but by informing her at the refectory, that during the whole of that day business would confine him to his cell, he thought himself secure from her wakeful jealousy. Accordingly, at the hours when the Spaniards are generally taking their siesta, he ventured to quit the abbey by a private door, the key of which was in his possession. The cowl of his habit was thrown over his face : from the heat of the weather the streets were almost totally deserted : the monk met with few people, found the strada di San Iago, and arrived without accident at Donna Elvira's door. He rang, was admitted, and immediately ushered into an upper apartment.

It was here that he ran the greatest risk of a discovery. Had Leonella been at home, she would have recognised him directly. Her communicative disposition would never have permitted her to rest, till all Madrid was informed that Ambrosio had ventured out of the abbey, and visited her sister. Fortune here stood the monk's friend. On Leonella's return home, she found a letter instructing her, that a cousin was just dead, who had left what little he possessed between herself and Elvira. To secure this bequest she was obliged to set out for Cordova without losing a moment. Amidst all her foibles, her heart was truly warm and affectionate, and she was unwilling to quit her sister in so dangerous a state. But Elvira insisted upon her taking the journey, conscious that, in her daughter's forlorn situation, no increase of fortune, however trifling, ought to be neglected. Accordingly Leonella left

Madrid, sincerely grieved at her sister's illness, and giving some few sighs to the memory of the amiable but inconstant Don Christoval. She was fully persuaded, that at first she had made a terrible breach in his heart; but hearing nothing more of him, she supposed that he had quitted the pursuit, disgusted by the lowness of her origin, and knowing upon other terms than marriage he had nothing to hope from such a dragon of virtue as she professed herself; or else, that being naturally capricious and changeable, the remembrance of her charms had been effaced from the condé's heart by those of some newer beauty. Whatever was the cause of her losing him, she lamented it sorely. She strove in vain, as she assured everybody who was kind enough to listen to her, to tear his image from her too susceptible heart. She affected the airs of a love-sick virgin, and carried them all to the most ridiculous excess. She heaved lamentable sighs, walked with her arms folded, uttered long soliloquies, and her discourse generally turned upon some forsaken maid, who expired of a broken heart! Her fiery locks were always ornamented with a garland of willow. Every evening she was seen straying upon the banks of a rivulet by moonlight; and she declared herself a violent admirer of murmuring streams and nightingales—

> "Of lonely haunts, and twilight groves,
> Places which pale passion loves!"

Such was the state of Leonella's mind when obliged to quit Madrid. Elvira was out of patience

at these follies, and endeavoured at persuading her to act like a reasonable woman. Her advice was thrown away: Leonella assured her at parting that nothing could make her forget the perfidious Don Christoval. In this point she was fortunately mistaken. An honest youth of Cordova, journeyman to an apothecary, found that her fortune would be sufficient to set him up in a genteel shop of his own. In consequence of this reflection he avowed himself her admirer. Leonella was not inflexible; the ardour of his sighs melted her heart, and she soon consented to make him the happiest of mankind. She wrote to inform her sister of her marriage; but, for reasons which will be explained hereafter, Elvira never answered her letter.

Ambrosio was conducted into the anti-chamber to that where Elvira was reposing. The female domestic who had admitted him, left him alone, while she announced his arrival to her mistress. Antonia, who had been by her mother's bed-side, immediately came to him.

"Pardon me, father," said she, advancing towards him; when recognising his features, she stopped suddenly, and uttered a cry of joy. "Is it possible?" she continued, "do not my eyes deceive me? Has the worthy Ambrosio broken through his resolution, that he may soften the agonies of the best of women? What pleasure will this visit give my mother! Let me not delay for a moment the comfort which your piety and wisdom will afford her."

Thus saying, she opened the chamber door, presented to her mother her distinguished visitor,

and having placed an arm-chair by the side of the bed, withdrew into another apartment.

Elvira was highly gratified by this visit: her expectations had been raised high by general report, but she found them far exceeded. Ambrosio, endowed by nature with powers of pleasing, exerted them to the utmost, while conversing with Antonia's mother. With persuasive eloquence he calmed every fear, and dissipated every scruple. He bade her reflect on the infinite mercy of her judge, despoiled death of his darts and terrors, and taught her to view without shrinking the abyss of eternity, on whose brink she then stood. Elvira was absorbed in attention and delight; while she listened to his exhortations, confidence and comfort stole insensibly into her mind. She unbosomed to him without hesitation her cares and apprehensions. The latter respecting a future life he had already quieted, and he now removed the former, which she felt for the concerns of this. She trembled for Antonia; she had none to whose care she could recommend her, save to the Marquis de las Cisternas, and her sister Leonella. The protection of the one was very uncertain; and as to the other, though fond of her niece, Leonella was so thoughtless and vain, as to make her an improper person to have the sole direction of a girl so young and ignorant of the world. The friar no sooner learned the cause of her alarms, than he begged her to make herself easy upon that head. He doubted not being able to secure for Antonia a safe refuge in the house of one of his penitents, the Marchioness of Villa-Franca: this was a lady of acknowledged virtue,

remarkable for strict principle and extensive charity. Should accident deprive her of this resource, he engaged to procure Antonia a reception in some respectable convent, that is to say, in quality of boarder; for Elvira had declared herself no friend to a monastic life, and the monk was either candid or complaisant enough to allow that her disapprobation was not unfounded.

These proofs of the interest which he felt for her, completely won Elvira's heart. In thanking him, she exhausted every expression which gratitude could furnish, and protested, that now she should resign herself with tranquillity to the grave. Ambrosio rose to take leave; he promised to return the next day at the same hour, but requested that his visits might be kept secret.

"I am unwilling," said he, "that my breaking through a rule imposed by necessity, should be generally known. Had I not resolved never to quit my convent, except upon circumstances as urgent as that which has conducted me to your door, I should be frequently summoned upon insignificant occasions; that time would be engrossed by the curious, the unoccupied, and the fanciful, which I now pass at the bedside of the sick, in comforting the expiring penitent, and clearing the passage to eternity from thorns."

Elvira commended equally his prudence and compassion, promising to conceal carefully the honour of his visits. The monk then gave her his benediction and retired from the chamber.

In the anti-room he found Antonia; he could not refuse himself the pleasure of passing a few moments in her society. He bade her take com-

fort, for that her mother seemed composed and tranquil, and he hoped that she might yet do well. He enquired who attended her, and engaged to send the physician of his convent to see her, one of the most skilful in Madrid. He then launched out in Elvira's commendation, praised her purity and fortitude of mind, and declared that she had inspired him with the highest esteem and reverence. Antonia's innocent heart swelled with gratitude, joy danced in her eyes, where a tear still sparkled. The hopes which he gave her of her mother's recovery, the lively interest which he seemed to feel for her, and the flattering way in which she was mentioned by him, added to the report of his judgment and virtue, and to the impression made upon her by his eloquence, confirmed the favourable opinion with which his first appearance had inspired Antonia. She replied with diffidence, but without restraint: she feared not to relate to him all her little sorrows, all her little fears and anxieties; and she thanked him for his goodness with all the genuine warmth which favours kindle in a young and innocent heart. Such a one alone knows how to estimate benefits at their full value. They who are conscious of mankind's perfidy and selfishness, ever receive an obligation with apprehension and disgust; they suspect that some secret motive must lurk behind it; they express their thanks with restraint and caution, and fear to praise a kind action to its full extent, aware that on some future day a return may be required. Not so Antonia—she thought the world was composed only of those who resembled her; and that vice existed, was to her still a secret. The monk

had been of service to her; he said that he wished her well; she was grateful for his kindness, and thought that no terms were strong enough to be the vehicle of her thanks. With what delight did Ambrosio listen to the declaration of her artless gratitude! The natural grace of her manners, the unequalled sweetness of her voice, her modest vivacity, her unstudied elegance, her expressive countenance and intelligent eyes united to inspire him with pleasure and admiration; while the solidity and correctness of her remarks received additional beauty from the unaffected simplicity of the language in which they were conveyed.

Ambrosio was at length obliged to tear himself from this conversation, which possessed for him but too many charms. He repeated to Antonia his wishes, that his visits should not be made known; which desire she promised to observe. He then quitted the house, while his enchantress hastened to her mother, ignorant of the mischief which her beauty had caused. She was eager to know Elvira's opinion of the man whom she had praised in such enthusiastic terms, and was delighted to find it equally favourable, if not even more so than her own.

"Even before he spoke," said Elvira, "I was prejudiced in his favour; the fervour of his exhortations, dignity of his manner, and closeness of his reasoning, were very far from inducing me to alter my opinion. His fine and full-toned voice struck me particularly; but surely, Antonia, I have heard it before. It seemed perfectly familiar to my ear; either I must have known the abbot in former times, or his voice bears a wonderful

resemblance to that of some other to whom I have often listened. There were certain tones which touched my very heart, and made me feel sensations so singular that I strive in vain to account for them."

"My dearest mother, it produced the same effect upon me; yet certainly neither of us ever heard his voice till we came to Madrid. I suspect that what we attribute to his voice really proceeds from his pleasant manners, which forbid our considering him as a stranger. I know not why, but I feel more at my ease while conversing with him, than I usually do with people who are unknown to me. I feared not to repeat to him all my childish thoughts; and somehow I felt confident that he would hear my folly with indulgence. Oh! I was not deceived in him; he listened to me with such an air of kindness and attention; he answered me with such gentleness, such condescension; he did not call me an infant, and treat me with contempt, as our cross old confessor at the Castle used to do. I verily believe that if I had lived in Murcia a thousand years, I never should have liked that fat old father Dominic!"

"I confess that father Dominic had not the most pleasing manners in the world; but he was honest, friendly, and well-meaning."

"Ah! my dear mother, those qualities are so common——"

"God grant, my child, that experience may not teach you to think them rare and precious! I have found them but too much so. But tell me, Antonia, why is it impossible for me to have seen the abbot before?"

"Because, since the moment when he entered the abbey he has never been on the outside of its walls. He told me just now, that from his ignorance of the streets he had some difficulty to find the strada di San Iago, though so near the abbey."

"All this is possible, and still I may have seen him *before* he entered the abbey: in order to come out, it was necessary that he should first go in."

"Holy virgin! as you say, that is very true. Oh! But might he not have been born in the abbey?"

Elvira smiled.

"Why, not very easily."

"Stay, stay! Now I recollect how it was. He was put into the abbey quite a child; the common people say that he fell from heaven, and was sent as a present to the Capuchins by the Virgin."

"That was very kind of her. And so he fell from heaven, Antonia? He must have had a terrible tumble."

"Many do not credit this; and I fancy, my dear mother, that I must number you among the unbelievers. Indeed, as our landlady told my aunt, the general idea is, that his parents, being poor, and unable to maintain him, left him just born at the abbey door; the late superior, from pure charity, had him educated in the convent; and he proved to be a model of virtue, and piety, and learning, and I know not what else besides. In consequence, he was first received as a brother of the order, and not long ago was chosen abbot. However, whether this account or the other is the true one—at least all agree, that when the monks took him under their care, he could not speak;

therefore you could not have heard his voice before he entered the monastery, because at that time he had no voice at all."

"Upon my word, Antonia, you argue very closely; your conclusions are infallible. I did not suspect you of being so able a logician."

"Ah! you are mocking me; but so much the better. It delights me to see you in spirits; besides, you seem tranquil and easy, and I hope that you will have no more convulsions. Oh! I was sure the abbot's visit would do you good."

"It has indeed done me good, my child. He has quieted my mind upon some points which agitated me, and I already feel the effects of his attention. My eyes grow heavy, and I think I can sleep a little. Draw the curtains, my Antonia: but if I should not wake before midnight, do not sit up with me, I charge you."

Antonia promised to obey her; and, having received her blessing, drew the curtains of the bed. She then seated herself in silence at her embroidery frame, and beguiled the hours with building castles in the air. Her spirits were enlivened by the evident change for the better in Elvira, and her fancy presented her with visions bright and pleasing. In these dreams Ambrosio made no despicable figure. She thought of him with joy and gratitude; for but every idea which fell to the friar's share, at least two were unconsciously bestowed upon Lorenzo. Thus passed the time, till the bell in the neighbouring steeple of the Capuchin cathedral announced the hour of midnight. Antonia remembered her mother's injunctions, and obeyed them, though with

reluctance. She undrew the curtains with caution. Elvira was enjoying a profound and quiet slumber; her cheek glowed with health's returning colours; a smile declared that her dreams were pleasant, and as Antonia bent over her she fancied that she heard her name pronounced. She kissed her mother's forehead softly, and retired to her chamber; there she knelt before a statue of St. Rosolia, her patroness; she recommended herself to the protection of heaven, and, as had been her custom from infancy, concluded her devotions by chaunting the following stanzas:—

MIDNIGHT HYMN.[1]

Now all is hush'd; the solemn chime,
No longer swells the nightly gale:
Thy awful presence, how sublime,
With spotless heart once more I hail.

'Tis now the moment still and dread,
When sorcerers use their baleful power;
When graves give up their buried dead
To profit by the sanctioned hour.

From guilt and guilty thoughts secure,
To duty and devotion true,
With bosom light and conscience pure,
Repose, thy gentle aid I woo.

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[1] Probably these stanzas were suggested by Imogen's prayer in *Cymbeline*—

"From fairies and from tempters of the night
Guard me, good angels."

(Footnote in 2nd Edition.)

Good angels ! take my thanks, that still
The snares of vice I view with scorn ;
Thanks, that to-night as free from ill
I sleep, as when I woke at morn.

Yet may not my unconscious breast
Harbour some guilt to me unknown ?
Some wish impure, which unreprest
You blush to see, and I to own ?

If such there be, in gentle dream
Instruct my feet to shun the snare ;
Bid truth upon my errors beam,
And deign to make me still your care.

Chase from my peaceful bed away,
The witching spell, a foe to rest,
The nightly goblin, wanton fay,
The ghost in pain, and fiend unblest.

Let not the tempter in mine ear
Pour lessons of unhallowed joy ;
Let not the night-mare wandering near
My couch, the calm of sleep destroy.

Let not some horrid dream affright
With strange fantastic forms mine eyes ;
But rather bid some vision bright
Display the bliss of yonder skies.

Show me the crystal domes of heaven,
The worlds of light where angels lie ;
Show me the lot to mortals given,
Who guiltless live, who guiltless die.

Then show me how a seat to gain
Amidst those blissful realms of air ;
Teach me to shun each guilty stain,
And guide me to the good and fair.

So every morn and night my voice
To heaven the grateful strain shall raise,
If you as guardian powers rejoice,
Good angels! and exalt your praise.

So will I strive, with zealous fire,
Each voice to shun, each fault correct:
Will love the lessons you inspire,
And prize the virtues you protect.

Then when at length, by high command,
My body seeks the grave's repose,
When death draws nigh with friendly hand,
My failing pilgrim eyes to close:

Pleased that my soul escapes the wreck,
Sightless will I my life resign,
And yield to God my spirit back,
As pure as when it first was mine.

Having finished her usual devotions, Antonia retired to bed. Sleep soon stole over her senses; and for several hours she enjoyed that calm repose which innocence alone can know, and for which many a monarch with pleasure would exchange his crown.

CHAPTER VII

———Ah! how dark
These long-extended realms and rueful wastes:
Where nought but silence reigns, and night, dark night,
Dark as was chaos ere the infant sun
Was rolled together, or had tried its beams
Athwart the gloom profound! The sickly taper,
By glimmering through thy low-browed misty vaults
Furred round with mouldy damps and ropy slime,
Lets fall a supernumerary horror,
And only serves to make thy night more irksome!

BLAIR.

RETURNED undiscovered to the abbey, Ambrosio's mind was filled with the most pleasing images. He was wilfully blind to the danger of exposing himself to Antonia's charms: he only remembered the pleasure which her society had afforded him, and rejoiced in the prospect of that pleasure being repeated. He failed not to profit by Elvira's indisposition to obtain a sight of her daughter every day. At first he bounded his wishes to inspire Antonia with friendship: but no sooner was he convinced that she felt that sentiment in its fullest extent, than his aim became more decided, and his attentions assumed a warmer colour. The innocent familiarity with which she treated him, encouraged his desires. Grown used to her modesty, it no longer commanded the same respect and awe; he still admired it, but it only made him more anxious to deprive

her of that quality which formed her principal charm. Warmth of passion, and natural penetration, of which latter, unfortunately both for himself and Antonia, he possessed an ample share, supplied a knowledge of the arts of seduction. He easily distinguished the emotions which were favourable to his designs, and seized every means with avidity of infusing corruption into Antonia's bosom. This he found no easy matter. Extreme simplicity prevented her from perceiving the aim to which the monk's insinuations tended; but the excellent morals which she owed to Elvira's care, the solidity and correctness of her understanding, and a strong sense of what was right, implanted in her heart by nature, made her feel that his precepts must be faulty. By a few simple words she frequently overthrew the whole bulk of his sophistical arguments, and made him conscious how weak they were when opposed to virtue and truth. On such occasions he took refuge in his eloquence; he overpowered her with a torrent of philosophical paradoxes, to which, not understanding them, it was impossible for her to reply; and thus, though he did not convince her that his reasoning was just, he at least prevented her from discovering it to be false. He perceived that her respect for his judgment augmented daily, and doubted not with time to bring her to the point desired.

He was not unconscious that his attempts were highly criminal. He saw clearly the baseness of seducing the innocent girl; but his passion was too violent to permit his abandoning his design. He resolved to pursue it, let the consequences be

what they might. He depended upon finding Antonia in some unguarded moment; and seeing no other man admitted into her society, nor hearing any mentioned either by her or by Elvira, he imagined that her young heart was still unoccupied. While he waited for the opportunity of satisfying his unwarrantable lust, every day increased his coldness for Matilda. Not a little was this occasioned by the consciousness of his faults to her. To hide them from her, he was not sufficiently master of himself: yet he dreaded lest, in a transport of jealous rage, she should betray the secret on which his character and even his life depended. Matilda could not but remark his indifference: he was conscious that she remarked it, and, fearing her reproaches, shunned her studiously. Yet, when he could not avoid her, her mildness might have convinced him that he had nothing to dread from her resentment. She had resumed the character of the gentle, interesting Rosario: she taxed him not with ingratitude; but her eyes filled with involuntary tears, and the soft melancholy of her countenance and voice uttered complaints far more touching than words could have conveyed. Ambrosio was not unmoved by her sorrow; but unable to remove its cause, he forbore to show that it affected him. As her conduct convinced him that he needed not fear her vengeance, he continued to neglect her, and avoided her company with care. Matilda saw that she in vain attempted to regain his affections; yet she stifled the impulse of resentment, and continued to treat her inconstant lover with her former fondness and affection.

By degrees Elvira's constitution recovered itself. She was no longer troubled with convulsions, and Antonia ceased to tremble for her mother. Ambrosio beheld this re-establishment with displeasure. He saw that Elvira's knowledge of the world would not be the dupe of his sanctified demeanour, and that she would easily perceive his views upon her daughter. He resolved, therefore, before she quitted her chamber to try the extent of his influence over the innocent Antonia.

One evening, when he had found Elvira almost perfectly restored to health, he quitted her earlier than was his usual custom. Not finding Antonia in the anti-chamber, he ventured to follow her to her own. It was only separated from her mother's by a closet, in which Flora, the waiting-woman, generally slept. Antonia sat upon a sofa with her back towards the door, and read attentively. She heard not his approach, till he had seated himself by her. She started, and welcomed him with a look of pleasure: then rising, she would have conducted him to the sitting-room; but Ambrosio, taking her hand, obliged her by gentle violence to resume her place. She complied without difficulty: she knew not that there was more impropriety in conversing with him in one room than another. She thought herself equally secure of his principles and her own; and having replaced herself upon the sofa, she began to prattle to him with her usual ease and vivacity.

He examined the book which she had been reading, and had now placed upon the table. It was the Bible.

"How!" said the friar to himself, "Antonia reads the Bible, and is still so ignorant?"

But, upon further inspection, he found that Elvira had made exactly the same remark. That prudent mother, while she admired the beauties of the sacred writings, was convinced that, unrestricted, no reading more improper could be permitted to a young woman. Many of the narratives can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast; everything is called plainly and roundly by its name; and the annals of a brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions. Yet this is the book which young women are recommended to study, which is put into the hands of children, able to comprehend little more than those passages of which they had better remain ignorant, and which but too frequently inculcates the first rudiments of vice, and gives the first alarm to the still sleeping passions. Of this was Elvira so fully convinced, that she would have preferred putting into her daughter's hands *Amadis de Gaul*, or *The Valiant Champion, Tirante the White;* and would sooner have authorised her studying the lewd exploits of *Don Galaor*, or the lascivious jokes of *Damsel Plazer di mi vida.* She had in consequence made two resolutions respecting the Bible. The first was, that Antonia should not read it till she was of an age to feel its beauties, and profit by its morality. The second that it should be copied out with her own hand, and all improper passages either altered or omitted. She had adhered to this determination, and such was the Bible which Antonia was reading; it had been

lately delivered to her, and she perused it with avidity, with a delight that was inexpressible. Ambrosio perceived his mistake, and replaced the book upon the table.

Antonia spoke of her mother's health with all the enthusiastic joy of a youthful heart.

"I admire your filial affection," said the abbot; "it proves the excellence and sensibility of your character; it promises a treasure to him whom heaven has destined to possess your affections. The breast so capable of fondness for a parent, what will it feel for a lover? Nay, perhaps, what feels it for one even now? Tell me, my lovely daughter, have you known what it is to love? Answer me with sincerity: forget my habit, and consider me only as a friend."

"What it is to love?" said she, repeating his question. "Oh! yes, undoubtedly; I have loved many, many people."

"That is not what I mean. The love of which I speak can be felt only for one. Have you never seen the man whom you wished to be your husband?"

"Oh! no, indeed!"

This was an untruth, but she was unconscious of its falsehood: she knew not the nature of her sentiments for Lorenzo; and never having seen him since his first visit to Elvira, with every day his image grew less forcibly impressed upon her bosom: besides she thought of an husband with all a virgin's terror, and negatived the friar's demand without a moment's hesitation.

"And do you not long to see that man, Antonia? Do you feel no void in your heart, which

you fain would have filled up? Do you heave no sighs for the absence of some one dear to you, but who that some one is you know not? Perceive you not that what formerly could please, has charms for you no longer? that a thousand new wishes, new ideas, new sensations, have sprung in your bosom, only to be felt, never to be described? Or, while you fill every other heart with passion, is it possible that your own remains insensible and cold? It cannot be! That melting eye, that blushing cheek, that enchanting voluptuous melancholy which at times overspreads your features—all these marks belie your words: you love, Antonia, and in vain would hide it from me."

"Father, you amaze me! What is this love of which you speak? I neither know its nature, nor, if I feel it, why I should conceal the sentiment."

"Have you seen no man, Antonia, whom, though never seen before, you seemed long to have sought? whose form, though a stranger's, was familiar to your eyes? the sound of whose voice soothed you, pleased you, penetrated to your very soul? in whose presence you rejoiced, for whose absence you lamented? with whom your heart seemed to expand, and in whose bosom, with confidence unbounded, you reposed the cares of your own? Have you not felt this, Antonia?"

"Certainly I have: the first time that I saw you, I felt it."

Ambrosio started. Scarcely dared he credit his hearing.

"Me, Antonia?" he cried, his eyes sparkling

with delight and impatience, while he seized her hand, and pressed it rapturously to his lips. "Me, Antonia? You felt these sentiments for me?"

"Even with more strength than you have described. The very moment that I beheld you, I felt so pleased, so interested! I waited so eagerly to catch the sound of your voice; and, when I heard it, it seemed so sweet! it spoke to me a language till then so unknown! Methought it told me a thousand things which I wished to hear! It seemed as if I had long known you; as if I had a right to your friendship, your advice, and your protection. I wept when you departed, and longed for the time which should restore you to my sight."

"Antonia! my charming Antonia!" exclaimed the monk, and caught her to his bosom: "Can I believe my senses? Repeat it to me, my sweet girl! Tell me again that you love me, that you love me truly and tenderly!"

"Indeed I do: let my mother be excepted, and the world holds no one more dear to me."

At this frank avowal Ambrosio no longer possessed himself: wild with desire, he clasped the blushing trembler in his arms. He fastened his lips greedily upon hers, sucked in her pure delicious breath, violated with his bold hand the treasures of her bosom, and wound around him her soft and yielding limbs. Startled, alarmed, and confused at his action, surprise at first deprived her of the power of resistance. At length recovering herself, she strove to escape from his embrace.

"Father!—Ambrosio!" she cried, "release me, for God's sake!"

The door was thrown open.

But the licentious monk heeded not her prayers : he persisted in his design, and proceeded to take still greater liberties. Antonia prayed, wept, and struggled : terrified to the extreme, though at what she knew not, she exerted all her strength to repulse the friar, and was on the point of shrieking for assistance when the chamber door was suddenly thrown open. Ambrosio had just sufficient presence of mind to be sensible of his danger. Reluctantly he quitted his prey, and started hastily from the couch. Antonia uttered an exclamation of joy, flew towards the door, and found herself clasped in the arms of her mother.

Alarmed at some of the abbot's speeches, which Antonia had innocently repeated, Elvira resolved to ascertain the truth of her suspicions. She had known enough of mankind not to be imposed upon by the monk's reputed virtue. She reflected on several circumstances, which, though trifling, on being put together seemed to authorise her fears. His frequent visits, which, as far as she could see, were confined to her family ; his evident emotion, whenever she spoke of Antonia ; his being in the full prime and heat of manhood ; and above all, his pernicious philosophy communicated to her by Antonia, and which accorded but ill with his conversation in her presence ; all these circumstances inspired her with doubts respecting the purity of Ambrosio's friendship. In consequence she resolved, when he should next be alone with Antonia, to endeavour at surprising him. Her plan had succeeded. 'Tis true, that when she entered the room, he had already abandoned his prey ; but the disorder of her daughter's

dress, and the shame and confusion stamped upon the friar's countenance, sufficed to prove that her suspicions were but too well founded. However, she was too prudent to make those suspicions known. She judged that to unmask the impostor would be no easy matter, the public being so much prejudiced in his favour : and having but few friends, she thought it dangerous to make herself so powerful an enemy. She affected therefore not to remark his agitation, seated herself tranquilly upon the sofa, assigned some trifling reason for having quitted her room unexpectedly, and conversed on various subjects with seeming confidence and ease.

Reassured by her behaviour, the monk began to recover himself. He strove to answer Elvira without appearing embarrassed : but he was still too great a novice in dissimulation, and he felt that he must look confused and awkward. He soon broke off the conversation, and rose to depart. What was his vexation when, on taking leave, Elvira told him, in polite terms, that being now perfectly re-established, she thought it an injustice to deprive others of his company who might be more in need of it ! She assured him of her eternal gratitude for the benefit which during her illness she had derived from his society and exhortations : and she lamented that her domestic affairs, as well as the multitude of business which his situation must of necessity impose upon him, would in future deprive her of the pleasure of his visits. Though delivered in the mildest language, this hint was too plain to be mistaken. Still he was preparing to put in a remonstrance, when an

expressive look from Elvira stopped him short. He dared not press her to receive him, for her manner convinced him that he was discovered: he submitted without reply, took an hasty leave, and retired to the abbey, his heart filled with rage and shame, with bitterness and disappointment.

Antonia's mind felt relieved by his departure; yet she could not help lamenting that she was never to see him more. Elvira also felt a secret sorrow: she had received too much pleasure from thinking him her friend, not to regret the necessity of changing her opinion; but her mind was too much accustomed to the fallacy of worldly friendships to permit her present disappointment to weigh upon it long. She now endeavoured to make her daughter aware of the risk which she had run: but she was obliged to treat the subject with caution, lest, in removing the bandage of ignorance, the veil of innocence should be rent away. She therefore contented herself with warning Antonia to be on her guard, and ordering her, should the abbot persist in his visits, never to receive them but in company. With these injunctions Antonia promised to comply.

Ambrosio hastened to his cell. He closed the door after him, and threw himself upon the bed in despair. The impulse of desire, the stings of disappointment, the shame of detection, and the fear of being publicly unmasked, rendered his bosom the scene of the most horrible confusion. He knew not what course to pursue. Debarred the presence of Antonia, he had no hopes of satisfying that passion which was now become a part of his existence. He recollected that his

secret was in a woman's power: he trembled with apprehension when he beheld the precipice before him, and with rage when he thought that, had it not been for Elvira, he should now have possessed the object of his desires. With the direst imprecations he vowed vengeance against her: he swore that, cost what it would, he would still possess Antonia. Starting from the bed, he paced the chamber with disordered steps, howled with impotent fury, dashed himself violently against the walls, and indulged all the transports of rage and madness.

He was still under the influence of this storm of passions, when he heard a gentle knock at the door of his cell. Conscious that his voice must have been heard, he dared not refuse admittance to the importuner. He strove to compose himself, and hide his agitation. Having in some degree succeeded, he drew back the bolt: the door opened, and Matilda appeared.

At this precise moment there was no one with whose presence he could better have dispensed. He had not sufficient command over himself to conceal his vexation. He started back and frowned.

"I am busy," said he in a stern and hasty tone; "leave me."

Matilda heeded him not: she again fastened the door, and then advanced towards him with an air gentle and supplicating.

"Forgive me, Ambrosio," said she; "for your own sake I must not obey you. Fear no complaints from me; I come not to reproach you with ingratitude. I pardon you from my heart;

and since your love can no longer be mine, I request the next best gift, your confidence and friendship. We cannot force our inclinations: the little beauty you once saw in me has perished with its novelty; and if it can no longer excite desire, mine is the fault, not yours. But why persist in shunning me? why such anxiety to fly my presence? You have sorrows, but will not permit me to share them; you have wishes, but forbid my aiding your pursuits. 'Tis of this that I complain, not of your indifference to my person. I have given up the claims of the mistress, but nothing shall prevail on me to give up those of the friend."

"Generous Matilda!" he replied, taking her hand, "how far do you rise superior to the foibles of your sex! Yes, I accept your offer. I have need of an adviser, of a confidant, and in you I find every needful quality united. But to aid my pursuits—— Ah! Matilda, it lies not in your power!"

"It lies in no one's power but mine. Ambrosio, your secret is none to me: your every step, your every action has been observed by my attentive eye. You love."

"Matilda!"

"Why conceal it from me? Fear not the little jealousy which taints the generality of women: my soul disdains so despicable a passion. You love, Ambrosio; Antonia Dalsa is the object of your flame. I know every circumstance respecting your passion. Every conversation has been repeated to me. I have been informed of your attempt to enjoy Antonia's person, your dis-

appointment, and dismission from Elvira's house. You now despair of possessing your mistress; but I come to revive your hopes, and point out the road to success."

"To success? Oh! impossible."

"To those who dare, nothing is impossible. Rely upon me, and you may yet be happy. The time is come, Ambrosio, when regard for your comfort and tranquillity compels me to reveal a part of my history with which you are still unacquainted. Listen, and do not interrupt me. Should my confession disgust you, remember that in making it my sole aim is to satisfy your wishes, and restore that peace to your heart which at present has abandoned it. I formerly mentioned that my guardian was a man of uncommon knowledge. He took pains to instil that knowledge into my infant mind. Among the various sciences which curiosity had induced him to explore, he neglected not that which by most is esteemed impious, and by many chimerical: I speak of those arts which relate to the world of spirits. His deep researches into causes and effects, his unwearied application to the study of natural philosophy, his profound and unlimited knowledge of the properties and virtues of every gem which enriches the deep, of every herb which the earth produces, at length procured him the distinction which he had sought so long, so earnestly. His curiosity was fully slaked, his ambition amply gratified. He gave laws to the elements: he could reverse the order of nature: his eye read the mandates of futurity, and the infernal spirits were submissive to his command.

Why shrink you from me? I understand that enquiring look. Your suspicions are right, though your terrors are unfounded. My guardian concealed not from me his most precious acquisition. Yet, had I never seen *you* I should never have exerted my power. Like you, I shuddered at the thoughts of magic. Like you, I had formed a terrible idea of the consequences of raising a demon. To preserve that life which your love had taught me to prize, I had recourse to means which I trembled at employing. You remember that night which I passed in St. Clare's sepulchre? Then was it that, surrounded by mouldering bodies, I dared to perform those mystic rites, which summoned to my aid a fallen angel. Judge what must have been my joy at discovering that my terrors were imaginary. I saw the demon obedient to my orders: I saw him trembling at my frown; and found that, instead of selling my soul to a master, my courage had purchased for myself a slave."

"Rash Matilda! What have you done? You have doomed yourself to endless perdition; you have bartered for momentary power eternal happiness. If on witchcraft depends the fruition of my desires, I renounce your aid most absolutely. The consequences are too horrible. I dote upon Antonia, but am not so blinded by lust, as to sacrifice for her enjoyment my existence both in this world and in the next."

"Ridiculous prejudices! Oh! blush, Ambrosio, blush at being subjected to their dominion. Where is the risk of accepting my offers? What should induce my persuading you to this step,

except the wish of restoring you to happiness and quiet? If there is danger, it must fall upon me. It is I who invoke the ministry of the spirits: mine therefore will be the crime, and yours the profit; but danger there is none. The enemy of mankind is my slave, not my sovereign. Is there no difference between giving and receiving laws, between serving and commanding? Awake from your idle dreams, Ambrosio: throw from you these terrors so ill suited to a soul like yours; leave them for common men, and dare to be happy! Accompany me this night to St. Clare's sepulchre; there witness my incantations, and Antonia is your own."

"To obtain her by such means, I neither can nor will. Cease then to persuade me, for I dare not employ hell's agency."

"You *dare* not? How have you deceived me! That mind which I esteemed so great and valiant proves to be feeble, puerile, and grovelling, a slave to vulgar errors, and weaker than a woman's."

"What! Though conscious of the danger, wilfully shall I expose myself to the seducer's arts? Shall I renounce for ever my title to salvation? Shall my eyes seek a sight which I know will blast them? No, no, Matilda, I will not ally myself with God's enemy."

"Are you then God's friend at present? Have you not broken your engagements with Him, renounced His services, and abandoned yourself to the impulse of your passions? Are you not planning the destruction of innocence, the ruin of a creature whom He formed in the mould of angels? If not of demons, whose aid would you

invoke to forward this laudable design ? Will the seraphim protect it, conduct Antonia to your arms, and sanction with their ministry your illicit pleasures ? Absurd ! But I am not deceived, Ambrosio ! It is not virtue which makes you reject my offer ; you *would* accept it, but you *dare* not. 'Tis not the crime which holds your hand, but the punishment ; 'tis not respect for God which restrains you, but the terror of His vengeance ! Fain would you offend Him in secret, but you tremble to profess yourself His foe. Now shame on the coward soul, which wants the courage either to be a firm friend, or an open enemy ! "

" To look upon guilt with horror, Matilda, is in itself a merit : in this respect I glory to confess myself a coward. Though my passions have made me deviate from her laws, I still feel in my heart an innate love of virtue. But it ill becomes you to tax me with perjury ; you who first seduced me to violate my vows ; you who first roused my sleeping vices, made me feel the weight of religion's chains, and bade me be convinced that guilt had pleasures. Yet though my principles have yielded to the force of temperament, I still have sufficient grace to shudder at sorcery, and avoid a crime so monstrous, so unpardonable ! "

" Unpardonable, say you ? Where then is your constant boast of the Almighty's infinite mercy ? Has He of late set bounds to it ? Receives He no longer a sinner with joy ? You injure Him, Ambrosio ; you will always have time to repent, and He have goodness to forgive. Afford Him a glorious opportunity to exert that goodness : the greater your crime, the greater His merit in

pardoning. Away then with these childish scruples; be persuaded to your good, and follow me to the sepulchre."

"Oh! cease, Matilda! That scoffing tone, that bold and impious language is horrible in every mouth, but most so in a woman's. Let us drop a conversation which excites no other sentiments than horror and disgust. I will not follow you to the sepulchre, or accept the services of your infernal agents. Antonia shall be mine, but by human means."

"Then yours she will never be! You are banished her presence; her mother has opened her eyes to your designs, and she is now upon her guard against them. Nay, more, she loves another; a youth of distinguished merit possesses her heart; and unless you interfere, a few days will make her his bride. This intelligence was brought me by my invisible servants, to whom I had recourse on first perceiving your indifference. They watched your every action, related to me all that passed at Elvira's, and inspired me with the idea of favouring your designs. Their reports have been my only comfort. Though you have shunned my presence, all your proceedings were known to me; nay, I was constantly with you in some degree, thanks to this most precious gift!"

With these words she drew from beneath her habit a mirror of polished steel, the borders of which were marked with various strange and unknown characters.

"Amidst all my sorrows, amidst all my regrets for your coldness, I was sustained from despair by the virtues of this talisman. On pronouncing

certain words, the person appears in it on whom the observer's thoughts are bent; thus, though *I* was exiled from *your* sight, you, Ambrosio, were ever present to mine."

The friar's curiosity was strongly excited.

"What you relate is incredible! Matilda, are you not amusing yourself with my credulity?"

"Be your own eyes the judge."

She put the mirror into his hand. Curiosity induced him to take it, and love, to wish that Antonia might appear. Matilda pronounced the magic words. Immediately a thick smoke rose from the characters traced upon the borders, and spread itself over the surface. It dispersed again gradually; a confused mixture of colours and images presented themselves to the friar's eyes, which at length arranging themselves in their proper places, he beheld in miniature Antonia's lovely form.

The scene was a small closet belonging to her apartment. She was undressing to bathe herself. The long tresses of her hair were already bound up. The amorous monk had full opportunity to observe the voluptuous contours and admirable symmetry of her person. She threw off her last garment, and, advancing to the bath prepared for her, put her foot into the water. It struck cold, and she drew it back again. Though unconscious of being observed, an in-bred sense of modesty induced her to veil her charms; and she stood hesitating upon the brink in the attitude of the Venus de Medicis. At this moment a tame linnet flew towards her, nestled its head between her breasts, and nibbled them in wanton play.

The smiling Antonia strove in vain to shake off the bird, and at length raised her hands to drive it from its delightful harbour. Ambrosio could bear no more. His desires were worked up to frenzy.

"I yield!" he cried, dashing the mirror upon the ground: "Matilda, I follow you! Do with me what you will!"

She waited not to hear his consent repeated. It was already midnight. She flew to her cell, and soon returned with her little basket and the key of the cemetery, which had remained in her possession since her first visit to the vaults. She gave the monk no time for reflection.

"Come!" she said, and took his hand; "follow me, and witness the effects of your resolve."

This said, she drew him hastily along. They passed into the burying-ground unobserved, opened the door of the sepulchre, and found themselves at the head of the subterrane us staircase. As yet the beams of the full moon had guided their steps, but that resource now failed them. Matilda had neglected to provide herself with a lamp, Still holding Ambrosio's hand she descended the marble steps; but the profound obscurity with which they were overspread, obliged them to walk slow and cautiously.

"You tremble!" said Matilda to her companion; "fear not, the destined spot is near."

They reached the foot of the staircase, and continued to proceed, feeling their way along the walls. On turning a corner, suddenly they descried faint gleams of light, which seemed burning at a distance. Thither they bent their

steps. The rays proceeded from a small sepulchral lamp which flamed unceasingly before the statue of St. Clare. It tinged with dim and cheerless beams the massy columns which supported the roof, but was too feeble to dissipate the thick gloom in which the vaults above were buried.

Matilda took the lamp.

"Wait for me!" said she to the friar; "in a few moments I am here again."

With these words she hastened into one of the passages which branched in various directions from this spot, and formed a sort of labyrinth. Ambrosio was now left alone. Darkness the most profound surrounded him, and encouraged the doubts which began to revive in his bosom. He had been hurried away by the delirium of the moment. The shame of betraying his terrors, while in Matilda's presence, had induced him to repress them; but, now that he was abandoned to himself, they resumed their former ascendency. He trembled at the scene which he was soon to witness. He knew not how far the delusions of magic might operate upon his mind: they possibly might force him to some deed whose commission would make the breach between himself and heaven irreparable. In this fearful dilemma, he would have implored God's assistance, but was conscious that he had forfeited all claim to such protection. Gladly would he have returned to the abbey; but as he had passed through innumerable caverns and winding passages, the attempt of regaining the stairs was hopeless. His fate was determined; no possibility of escape presented itself. He therefore combated his

apprehensions, and called every argument to his succour, which might enable him to support the trying scene with fortitude. He reflected that Antonia would be the reward of his daring. He inflamed his imagination by enumerating her charms. He persuaded himself, that (as Matilda had observed) he always should have time sufficient for repentance; and that, as he employed *her* assistance, not that of demons, the crime of sorcery could not be laid to his charge. He had read much respecting witchcraft; he understood that, unless a formal act was signed renouncing his claim to salvation, Satan would have no power over him. He was fully determined not to execute any such act, whatever threats might be used or advantages held out to him.

Such were his meditations while waiting for Matilda. They were interrupted by a low murmur, which seemed at no great distance from him. He was startled—he listened. Some minutes passed in silence, after which the murmur was repeated. It appeared to be the groaning of one in pain. In any other situation, this circumstance would only have excited his attention and curiosity. In the present, his predominant sensation was that of terror. His imagination totally engrossed by the ideas of sorcery and spirits, he fancied that some unquiet ghost was wandering near him; or else that Matilda had fallen a victim to her presumption, and was perishing under the cruel fangs of the demons. The noise seemed not to approach, but continued to be heard at intervals. Sometimes it became more audible—doubtless, as the sufferings of the

person who uttered the groans became more acute and insupportable. Ambrosio now and then thought that he could distinguish accents, and once in particular he was almost convinced that he heard a faint voice exclaim,

"God! Oh! God! No hope! No succour!"

Yet deeper groans followed these words: they died away gradually, and universal silence again prevailed.

"What can this mean?" thought the bewildered monk.

At that moment an idea which flashed into his mind, almost petrified him with horror. He started, and shuddered at himself.

"Should it be possible!" he groaned involuntarily; "should it be possible! Oh! what a monster am I!"

He wished to resolve his doubts, and to repair his fault, if it were not too late already. But these generous and compassionate sentiments were soon put to flight by the return of Matilda. He forgot the groaning sufferer, and remembered nothing but the danger and embarrassment of his own situation. The light of the returning lamp gilded the walls, and in a few moments after Matilda stood beside him. She had quitted her religious habit: she was now clothed in a long sable robe, on which was traced in gold embroidery a variety of unknown characters: it was fastened by a girdle of precious stones, in which was fixed a poniard. Her neck and arms were uncovered; in her hand she bore a golden wand; her hair was loose, and flowed wildly upon her shoulders; her eyes sparkled with terrific expression and her

whole demeanour was calculated to inspire the beholder with awe and admiration.

"Follow me!" she said to the monk in a low and solemn voice; "all is ready!"

His limbs trembled while he obeyed her. She led him through various narrow passages; and on every side as they passed along, the beams of the lamp displayed none but the most revolting objects; skulls, bones, graves, and images whose eyes seemed to glare on them with horror and surprise. At length they reached a spacious cavern, whose lofty roof the eye sought in vain to discover. A profound obscurity hovered through the void; damp vapours struck cold to the friar's heart, and he listened sadly to the blast while it howled along the lonely vaults. Here Matilda stopped. She turned to Ambrosio. His cheeks and lips were pale with apprehension. By a glance of mingled scorn and anger she reproved his pusillanimity, but she spoke not. She placed the lamp upon the ground near the basket. She motioned that Ambrosio should be silent, and began the mysterious rites. She drew a circle round him, another round herself; and then, taking a small phial from her basket, poured a few drops upon the ground before her. She bent over the place, muttered some indistinct sentences, and immediately a pale sulphurous flame arose from the ground. It increased by degrees, and at length spread its waves over the whole surface, the circles alone excepted in which stood Matilda and the monk. It then ascended the huge columns of unhewn stone, glided along the roof, and formed the cavern into an immense

chamber totally covered with blue trembling fire. It emitted no heat: on the contrary, the extreme chillness of the place seemed to augment with every moment. Matilda continued her incantations; at intervals she took various articles from the basket, the nature and name of most of which were unknown to the friar: but among the few which he distinguished, he particularly observed three human fingers, and an agnus dei, which she broke in pieces. She threw them all into the flames which burned before her, and they were instantly consumed.

The monk beheld her with anxious curiosity. Suddenly she uttered a loud and piercing shriek. She appeared to be seized with an access of delirium; she tore her hair, beat her bosom, used the most frantic gestures, and, drawing the poniard from her girdle, plunged it into her left arm. The blood gushed out plentifully; and, as he stood on the brink of the circle, she took care that it should fall on the outside. The flames retired from the spot on which the blood was pouring. A volume of dark clouds rose slowly from the ensanguined earth, and ascended gradually till it reached the vault of the cavern. At the same time a clap of thunder was heard, the echo pealed fearfully along the subterraneous passages, and the ground shook beneath the feet of the enchantress.

It was now that Ambrosio repented of his rashness. The solemn singularity of the charm had prepared him for something strange and horrible. He waited with fear for the spirit's appearance, whose coming was announced by

thunder and earthquakes. He looked wildly around him, expecting that some dreadful apparition would meet his eyes, the sight of which would drive him mad. A cold shivering seized his body, and he sank upon one knee, unable to support himself.

"He comes!" exclaimed Matilda in a joyful accent.

Ambrosio started, and expected the demon with terror. What was his surprise when, the thunder ceasing to roll, a full strain of melodious music sounded in the air! At the same time the cloud disappeared, and he beheld a figure more beautiful than fancy's pencil ever drew. It was a youth seemingly scarce eighteen, the perfection of whose form and face was unrivalled. He was perfectly naked: a bright star sparkled upon his forehead, two crimson wings extended themselves from his shoulders, and his silken locks were confined by a band of many-coloured fires, which played round his head, formed themselves into a variety of figures, and shone with a brilliancy far surpassing that of precious stones. Circlets of diamonds were fastened round his arms and ankles, and in his right hand he bore a silver branch imitating myrtle. His form shone with dazzling glory: he was surrounded by clouds of rose-coloured light, and at the moment that he appeared a refreshing air breathed perfumes through the cavern. Enchanted at a vision so contrary to his expectations, Ambrosio gazed upon the spirit with delight and wonder: yet, however beautiful the figure, he could not but remark a wildness in the demon's eyes, and a mysterious melancholy

impressed upon his features, betraying the fallen angel, and inspiring the spectators with secret awe.

The music ceased. Matilda addressed herself to the spirit: she spoke in a language unintelligible to the monk, and was answered in the same. She seemed to insist upon something which the demon was unwilling to grant. He frequently darted upon Ambrosio angry glances, and at such times the friar's heart sank within him. Matilda appeared to grow incensed; she spoke in a loud and commanding tone, and her gesture declared that she was threatening him with her vengeance. Her menaces had the desired effect. The spirit sank upon his knee, and with a submissive air presented to her the branch of myrtle. No sooner had she received it, than the music was again heard; a thick cloud spread itself over the apparition; the blue flames disappeared, and total obscurity reigned through the cave. The abbot moved not from his place: his faculties were all bound up in pleasure, anxiety, and surprise. At length the darkness dispersing, he perceived Matilda standing near him in her religious habit, with the myrtle in her hand. No traces remained of the incantation, and the vaults were only illuminated by the faint rays of the sepulchral lamp.

"I have succeeded," said Matilda, "though with more difficulty than I expected. Lucifer, whom I summoned to my assistance, was at first unwilling to obey my commands; to enforce his compliance, I was constrained to have recourse to my strongest charms. They have produced

the desired effect, but I have engaged never more to invoke his agency in your favour. Beware then how you employ an opportunity which never will return. My magic arts will now be of no use to you: in future you can only hope for supernatural aid, by invoking the demons yourself, and accepting the conditions of their service. This you will never do. You want strength of mind to force them to obedience; and unless you pay their established price, they will not be your voluntary servants. In this one instance they consent to obey you; I offer you the means of enjoying your mistress, and be careful not to lose the opportunity. Receive this constellated myrtle: while you bear this in your hand, every door will fly open to you. It will procure you access to-morrow night to Antonia's chamber: then breathe upon it thrice, pronounce her name, and place it upon her pillow. A death-like slumber will immediately seize upon her, and deprive her of the power of resisting your attempts. Sleep will hold her till break of morning. In this state you may satisfy your desires without danger of being discovered; since, when daylight shall dispel the effects of the enchantment, Antonia will perceive her dishonour, but be ignorant of the ravisher. Be happy then, my Ambrosio, and let this service convince you that my friendship is disinterested and pure. The night must be near expiring: let us return to the abbey, lest our absence should create surprise."

The abbot received the talisman with silent gratitude. His ideas were too much bewildered by the adventures of the night, to permit his

expressing his thanks audibly, or indeed as yet to feel the whole value of her present. Matilda took up her lamp and basket, and guided her companion from the mysterious cavern. She restored the lamp to its former place, and continued her route in darkness till she reached the foot of the staircase. The first beams of the rising sun darting down it facilitated the ascent. Matilda and the abbot hastened out of the sepulchre, closed the door after them, and soon regained the abbey's western cloister. No one met them, and they retired unobserved to their respective cells.

The confusion of Ambrosio's mind now began to appease. He rejoiced in the fortunate issue of his adventure, and, reflecting upon the virtues of the myrtle, looked upon Antonia as already in his power. Imagination retraced to him those secret charms betrayed to him by the enchanted mirror, and he waited with impatience for the approach of midnight.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME

NOTES TO VOL. II

COLLATION OF AUTHOR'S ALTERATIONS.

P. 24 l. 20. For " talk nonsense " read " make love."

P. 38 l. 33. For " clasped her in my arms," etc., read " clasping her in my arms I exclaimed,

" Agnes ! Agnes ! thou art mine !
Agnes ! Agnes ! I am thine.
Fairest ! dearest ! thou art mine.
Leave thee will I never !
Thou art mine !
I am thine !
Body and soul for ever."

P. 44. l. 7. Delete " In my veins," etc., and read

" Leave thee will I never !
I am thine !
Thou art mine !
Body and soul for ever ! "

P. 60 l. 8. For " avowed concubine " read " acknowledged mistress."

P. 72 l. 16. Delete " in spite of my disguise."

P. 120. Delete motto at beginning of chapter and the first eight paragraphs, *i.e.* down to " declared to be in her possession," and read

CHAPTER VI

" What is't ye do ?
. . . A deed without a name."—*Macbeth.*

" We must now revisit the monastery of the Capuchins. There we shall find bosoms agitated by very

different emotions from those which were felt by the innocent inhabitants of Elvira's dwelling.

"With every step that Ambrosio made in the path of vice, he first looked with regret to the station which he had quitted. But, alas! with every step the regret became weaker. Matilda's eloquence and beauty, the power of habit, and the frailty of human nature, gradually diminished the sensation, and at length it scarce could be said to be felt by the monk's bosom at all. He no longer reflected with shame upon his conduct, or dreaded the vengeance of offended heaven. One fear alone possessed him. He trembled to lose Matilda, who still laboured under the influence of poison. He therefore pressed her with earnestness to use the means of preservation which she had before declared to be in her possession."

P. 124 l. 14. For "incontinence" read "weakness."

P. 124 l. 21. Delete "The pleasures which he" to "his mind."

P. 124 l. 24. Delete "voluptuousness."

P. 124 l. 27. Delete from "indulged in excesses" to "recoiled at," and read "committed an error from which but a few hours before he would have recoiled."

P. 125 l. 5. Delete from "beauty, and" to "be forgotten," and read "charm and tenderness."

P. 125 l. 9. For "the pleasures of the former night" read "her possession."

P. 125 l. 26. For "incontinence," read "that which is."

P. 125 l. 30. Delete from "he threw himself" to "his pleasures."

P. 134 l. 3. Delete from "The friar returned" to "rang for matins."

P. 134 l. 7. For "The same pleasures were frequently repeated" read "This the friar hesitated not to promise, or Matilda to believe."

P. 134 l. 21. For "desires" read "emotions."

P. 134 l. 25. Delete "The monk was glutted with the fulness of pleasure."

P. 134 l. 27. For "paramour" read "conquest."

P. 134 l. 27. Delete from "his warm constitution" to "with disgust."

P. 135 l. 2. For "he had obtained her favours" read "she had become his."

P. 135 l. 3. Delete from "and she felt" to "been sharers."

P. 135 l. 5. For "Unfortunately" read "but unfortunately.

P. 135 l. 23. Delete from "Still, however," to "passions safely."

P. 138 l. 27. Delete from "he was ignorant" to "to bestow."

P. 139 l. 30. For "The eyes of the luxurious friar," read "The friar's eyes."

P. 139 l. 33. Delete from "For his misfortune" to "their imaginations."

P. 140 l. 29. For "himself to Matilda's person," read "his address to Matilda."

P. 143 l. 14. Delete from "He felt not" to "from his eyes," and read "No voluptuous desires rioted in his bosom."

P. 144 l. 2. For "lustful" read "glutting."

P. 144 l. 4. Delete "gluts me with enjoyment even to loathing."

P. 144 l. 6. For "her prostitution. Disgusting!" read "what should be her shame."

P. 144 l. 12. For "refuse to" read "not."

P. 159 l. 27. For "encouraged his desires" read "gave him encouragement."

P. 160 l. 1. Delete "quality."

P. 160 l. 2. For " Warmth of passion " read " His."

P. 160 l. 3. Delete " latter."

P. 161 l. 6. Delete from " While he " to " lust," and read " In the meanwhile."

P. 162 l. 29. Delete " of his principles and her own."

P. 162 l. 32. Delete the three paragraphs from " He examined " to " upon the table."

(*This is the passage to which, at the period of the first publication, the gravest objection was taken.*)

P. 165 l. 9. For " passion " read " love."

P. 166 l. 24. Delete " wild with desire."

P. 166 l. 27. Delete from " violated with " to " yielding limbs."

P. 167 l. 1. Delete " licentious."

P. 167 l. 2. Delete from " he persisted " to " greater liberties."

P. 167 l. 10. For " Reluctantly he quitted his prey and started hastily from the couch " read " he released."

P. 167 l. 23. For " his being in the," etc., read " his youth."

P. 167 l. 34. Delete " the disorder of."

P. 168 l. 1. For " dress " read " alarm."

P. 168 l. 3. Delete " but too."

P. 171 l. 11. Delete " not of your indifference to my person," and read, " 'Tis of this that I complain, for though I have given up the claims of the mistress, nothing shall," etc.

P. 171 l. 34. Delete " your attempt to enjoy Antonia's person."

P. 173 l. 29. For " lust " read " desire."

P. 173 l. 29. For " enjoyment " read " possession."

P. 177 l. 20. Delete paragraph " The scene was," and read " Ambrosio gazed upon it for a few minutes; those few were sufficient to fix his irresolution."

P. 186 l. 13. For "enjoying" read "possessing."

P. 186 l. 20. Delete "deprive her of the power of resisting your attempts. Sleep will."

P. 187 l. 16. Delete all after "adventure," and read as follows: "Reflection upon the virtues of the myrtle, he looked upon Antonia as already in his power, and waited with impatience for the approach of midnight."

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